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STRAIGHT
ANSWERS
TO
LIFE QUESTIONS

STRAIGHT ANSWERS TO LIFE QUESTIONS

COPELAND SMITH

*at the
Microphone*



WILLETT, CLARK & COLBY
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TO

M O D I E J. S P I E G E L

FRIEND AND FELLOW-WORKER

As to the

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A word from the publishers

What are people thinking about—wondering about—questioning? A book which reveals that, or part of that, is a book which reaches into the hearts of people.

In examining the manuscript of this book, we were greatly impressed with the variety of questions raised and with the wide range of their source. The questions came from many sections of the country; from Protestant, Catholic and Jew; from white and black, old and young, men and women, boys and girls, rich and poor. They came from all walks of life: the professions, business, home; from married, unmarried; from fathers, mothers, sons and daughters.

Chiefly, these questions came from people with serious purpose, seeking enlightenment on some perplexing problem—some question of personal religion, personal conduct as to the right and wrong of this or that; some question of politics, of state, of health; some question of what to think, how to behave, what to do.

Quite evidently the questioners were looking to a source of help not easily available except through this Question Box conducted by Copeland Smith. As remarkable, to us, as the range and nature of these questions is the rare human understanding shown by Copeland Smith in answering them. There seems to be

A WORD FROM THE PUBLISHERS

magic in his ability to get behind the outward expression of the questioner into the very heart of the problem leading to the question.

Without being weak or flabby, he becomes sympathetic; if he has occasion to speak straight out, he does so firmly but kindly. He gives help where help is needed, for he understands the fact that *there is* a problem within the question.

And so it seems to us that these questions and answers, which have been given over the radio, should be made available in this collected and permanent form for the many who will find help or enlightenment in these pages.

THE PUBLISHERS.

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As Copeland Smith Sees It

Perhaps I had better explain. Some kind of explanation of the impertinence expressed by any book seems necessary and, in the case of a book like this, doubly so.

They tell me that at the Dill Pickle Club—most famous of all forums—they have a way of describing those who stand up to advise their fellows as victims of a “Messiah complex.” It is a complex suffered by reformers and hortatory preachers in plenty. Authors not a few are its victims also.

I shall attempt a plea of Not Guilty. I have no desire to be mandatory towards anybody about anything. This book would never have been printed and the work it represents would never have been inaugurated had I not been reared in a forum. My father was a barber and the barber-shop has been the debating place of all the nations since the beginnings of civilization. Civilization began when men first thought to control whiskers. Since all men who are men have whiskers to be removed, whatever their class or station, it follows that the barber-shop is the one place in the world where men meet as men, without distinction of class or creed. All opinions could be expressed for there are moments when, under the barber’s hand, the most vociferous are wise to be silent.

Thus, from the age of ten, I worked at intervals, in my father’s shop, guiding the debate as best I could, by means of a large latherbrush and a boy’s spirit of fair-play. Along with the man who wielded the razor, I held something far more potent than a gavel in moments of disorder. Quite early, I began to form the opinion

that no man had a monopoly in truth. Browning was just writing "The Ring and the Book" though I did not know that until afterwards. With him, I discovered that truth had at least nine sides—sometimes ninety, according to the number of customers awaiting their turn to be shaved. Every viewpoint had a location and truth herself emerged from the focal point where the views converged.

So much for my week-day, work-a-day life. On Sundays, we attended the Methodist Church—though not the American Methodist Church. In England, they still have in Methodism the circuit system by which the three ministers of three churches will change from one pulpit to another three times in three weeks. Thus, three distinct and sometimes opposed expressions of the same truth were not impossible. Add to that, the secretaryship of a debating society, frequent visits to the Rationalist Association, followed by seven years of the kind of friendly wrangling that is, perhaps, the most valuable part of college life, and you may begin to see why there is so much that is argumentative in this book.

But even then, the picture will not be complete. My ministry may be said to have begun amongst the debaters of Hyde Park, London, where, for three years it was my duty to share with Communists, Positivists and Flat-earthists, that great open-air forum of the British Empire which surrounds the Marble Arch. That was thirty years ago and neither microphones nor megaphones had yet been invented.

When the microphone came into my church I began to preach through it, not knowing that the mass of the people were through with preaching, for the time being. For many weeks I preached and for many weeks it seemed that my flowers of speech were born to blush unseen and waste their sweetness on the desert air. Then somebody suggested that, as Dr. Parkes Cadman was not reaching

Chicago or the Mid West with his famous Question Box, we might have one of our own. The work of answering questions on religious belief, Biblical interpretation, domestic and moral difficulties thus began, exactly one year ago. The result was a blizzard of letters and inquiries. I have personally answered fifteen thousand letters in the past twelve months and the indications are that this year that number will be doubled. They have come from every part of America and from every class of society—since American society at last has classes, alas.

Mostly, they have come from the non-church-going majority of the American people. These folk received what must be called their religious education, for the most part, in small-town churches and deemed themselves to have completed it before the urban exodus began. That meant that they received such religious education as they possess in the narrow confines of a church fighting for its existence in an over-churched community where every type of ecclesiasticism was fighting—often, by means of missionary subsidies from the ecclesiastical headquarters, for its very life. Strife means bitterness. Poverty involves cheap and ill-educated ministers. Small wonder that so many of the American people came to associate organized religion with un-Christlike antagonisms with which they became too easily disgusted. They brought their church letters to the larger city but they brought with them no enthusiasm for church policies or church instruction. They certainly did not pursue their religious studies.

Yet, because man is incurably religious, they still were interested in “the things that make for peace.” They gravitated to the Question Box, as steel filings to a magnet. The dogmatic did not interest them. The suggestive enthralled them. It is largely because of their impotency that this book sees the light.

There was another phase. Many of them were troubled about things other than the essentially religious. Domestic problems of the most delicate and obstinate kind, arising from the complexities of our modern life, and our appalling ignorance of the fundamental facts of being, torture vast masses of our people. Because we no longer know our next door neighbor and have lost the art of friendship amid our widening circle of acquaintance, life has become a very solitary affair. A lonely battle is a losing battle. A solitary pilgrimage is a long and weary pilgrimage. There is an inarticulate clamour for comradeship.

That need for advice in the domestic tangle of modern life, that need for somebody to talk to, expressed itself in my multitudinous mail. I began to see folk personally, privately. When the Radio League of Reconciliation was formed, our first task was to organize what we called a Clinic for Disturbed Minds. Not much of its work is reflected in the present volume because it needs a volume to itself. That volume is in course of preparation, though whether any publisher will endure to give the world such a disclosure of moral conditions as it must contain, is another matter.

But, here and there amid these pages will be found a hint of what bewildering and torturing questions afflict the modern mind. The answers claim to be nothing more than suggestive. There is no truth in dogmatism. It is not in the hammer. It is not in the anvil. Truth is the spark that flashes when the hammer and the anvil meet. The water is not in the hydrogen, any more than it is in the oxygen. Neither is it in the tumult of their mixture in the same retort. A drop of water is formed when the electric spark fuses the mixture into a compound.

In our human affairs, that spark is human sympathy—human understanding; that understanding which is the

AS COPELAND SMITH SEES IT

crowning proof of the divine in man. It need not be the understanding of man's problems. It must be an understanding of the fact that every man has a problem. There is much these pages only haltingly express but I hope they at least articulate a sympathy wider than the creeds of a church and broader than the confines of any ecclesiastical organization.

COPELAND SMITH.

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Chicago, Illinois.

STRAIGHT ANSWERS TO LIFE QUESTIONS

Is the World Getting Better?

QUESTION: How does the world view religion today? Would you say that the world is becoming more or less religious?

ANSWER: Most certainly the world is becoming more and not less religious. I would say quite as positively that the world is becoming less dogmatic in its religion. That is to say, it is less and less interested in the fine shades of theological definition, but is much more concerned than ever before about the broad purpose of the teaching of Jesus.

The World War is often used as an illustration of the religious degradation of the world. I take the contrary view. That war was the greatest conflagration the world has ever seen, because it followed the greatest period of imperialistic expansion the world has ever seen; just as long maturing sickness is likely to be a severe sickness. But the contrast is between the strongly humanitarian work done in that war and the apparent lack of all consciousness of the need of such humanitarian work, even as late as the wars of the 18th century.

Rupert Hughes' life of George Washington, for instance, will tell you that, as late as 1760 most men believed in scalping

their enemies, including white enemies; while there was no thought in the mind of anybody about such matters as even the care of wounded horses. To be severely wounded was to be almost certain of death. Look at the contrasts between the condition of labor two centuries ago, and now; between the number of people enfranchised then and now; between the position of women then and now.

A large book entitled "Gesta Christi" by C. Loring Brace will give you, under their various chapter headings, the achievements of Christ through the centuries in the fields of human activity and life.

What Is Truth?

QUESTION: In view of conflicting interpretations put upon Scripture and the differing versions of the meaning of life that are offered us everywhere, what is truth?

ANSWER: Ah, Pilate asked that same question in the self-same words and somebody—I think it was Bacon—said he turned away before he could get an answer. But Jesus answered that question on another occasion and I hope you won't turn away before you get your answer. Jesus said of himself, "I am the truth." That is the only answer that I know.

For the rest, I am as much in the dark as any Buddhist who ever lived. The forest of time is just as thick and bewildering for me as for the rest, except that I try to follow Christ through the forest. And I believe that is the only thing to do in a quest for truth—to follow Christ. That does not just mean following him through the pages of the New Testament but following him through life. I think it

means, as the 14th chapter of Revelation says, "following the Lamb whithersoever he goeth"; into any path of service, along any road of sacrifice. Where we go wrong is: when we come to the hard places, we turn back and ever after find ourselves unhappy and alone.

So, that is what I would answer. Truth is not a philosophy to be mastered. It is a life to be lived and it is lived by following Christ "whithersoever he goeth." It's a hard road sometimes. Sometimes there is a cross at the top of the hill; but I believe that the really happy people are the folk who literally do that—follow Christ. Perhaps the reason why there are so few really happy folk is that there are so few who *do* follow Christ.

Education vs. Religion

QUESTION: In view of the mounting crime statistics, don't you think that more education, instead of more religion, is needed to improve the world?

ANSWER: In view of the fact that around twenty per cent of the people are definitely religious, and in view of the fact that around ninety per cent of the people are educated—certainly, more educated than they are religious—I should say not.

I see that the "Cat" bandit, like many of our penitentiary inmates, is a college graduate. The chief effect of a merely materialistic education is to make a man who has a talent for mechanics a safecracker instead of a thug—and a man who robbed a cash register with his hands into a delicate-fingered forger.

Our moralities control our talents. To educate the brain or the fingers is not going to prevent crime. It is only going

to perfect the methods of the criminal. The task is to change the moral values behind the brain and fingers. That is the task of religion. I attribute the growth of crime, not to the lack of education—of which there was never so much—but to the neglect of the House of God. Statistics support that.

The Habit of Disliking

QUESTION: I don't know what's the matter with me. I am getting into a "disliking" mood. I find myself disliking folk and disliking more of their peculiarities. The thing is getting dangerous because I dislike more and more of the things that my own children do and even the things that my husband does—if not my husband himself. What am I to do about it?

ANSWER: There is an age when we are all very prone to drift—just drift—into that kind of mood, which may become a settled habit of mind. That age varies with various persons but is always within five years or so of our fortieth birthday. I said that we drift into it. The cure for drift is paddling, rowing. And the cure for drifting in one direction is to row in the other direction.

Try to cultivate the habit of liking and finding out the things worth liking. It's hard work, but so is rowing. Your husband—I'll be bound there are some heroic things about that man—the way he receives bad news about investments or the way he hides the unpleasant things from you, instead of sharing them, as his nature calls him to do. And it is the same with the children; they are careless, critical, often cruel, but there are heroic, struggling things about them worth looking for.

Cultivate this liking habit with some outside interest, such as the Art Institute. Join it and attend the lectures. I'm too busy to do that but they tell me that the tendency down there is to teach you appreciation instead of depreciation. That's fine and just what we all need about everything. The fact is, of course, that we are living in the most critical age the world has ever known and are simply pulling roses to pieces to find out where the smell comes from. When the process is ended, we wonder where the rose is.

Get the liking habit. When you walk down "Main Street" keep asking yourself what you can like: the shaft of light on that building; the fine swing of that girl's valiant body; the kindness of some bus conductor or policeman. Go to school to Christ who was always looking for things like that. That's the medicine for your ailment. Of course, it may have physical basis and it might be worth while to see a doctor about it, telling him frankly about the disliking.

Insurance and Assurance

QUESTION: Do you think it right to insure our lives? What is the difference between insuring one's life and insuring one's property?

ANSWER: I do not merely think that it is perfectly right to insure our lives but I think that it is the best means of saving and the almost imperative duty of married folk, both husbands and wives.

But the rightness of life insurance is rather proved, I think, if we stop using the word insurance and replace it with the term life *assurance*. The distinction was explained to me when I was about 16 years old and I haven't forgotten it. This is the way it was explained to me. We only use the word "insure" when we intend to provide against a possibility,

like fire, accident, theft or something that *may* happen. Death *must* happen. It is not merely a possibility but a certainty. We cannot insure against that. But we can *assure* ourselves against some of the economic disasters or inconveniences that may follow death. The distinction is not always expressed by insurance people themselves but I think you will find it useful. Thank you for telling me that I am sometimes able to help you. That cheers me.

Rooming-House Problems

QUESTION: From a Christian rooming-house keeper. What am I to do when good, but ignorant, girls from the country want to have male friends in their bedrooms; good girls who do not always understand, however, why I think that is undesirable?

ANSWER: That is a real question and you are not the first conscientious rooming-house keeper who has asked it. It ought to throw a flood of light into many closed minds concerning the needs of young folk who come to the city, with their innocence of city dangers and of their own natures. One-half of a city does not know how the other half lives.

First of all, let me say that I am certain that there are multitudes of rooming-house keepers who do care about their roomers, especially about their girl roomers, far beyond the mere money end of the business; who want to do the right thing, even if it is costly. I am sure that my questioner is one of them.

The second thing that I want to say, especially to any girl roomers who may be listening, is that while they may be indignant at the very suggestion that their male friends are not to be trusted, it yet remains a fact that not all male friends—or female friends either, for the matter of that—are

to be trusted. But, whether that is so or not, it is a fact of human experience not to be disputed by those who know themselves and the frailties of their own human nature, that there are moments and there are circumstances when the best of folk do not always care to trust themselves.

Yet there is the real necessity for places where young folk can get together in couples. Why not? I know a Methodist church where they decided to have little booths with a good deal of privacy, where couples can be together without interruption. The mating instinct is a fine one—anyhow, it is a real one—and it is simple prudery not to take account of it. It is a shameful feature of our city civilization that young folk cannot get together if they want to in circumstances that are removed both from temptation and suspicion against their good name.

But I think that all rooming-house proprietors ought to have a sitting room—a real, large sitting room for their guests, instead of turning every room in the house into a bedroom. I believe that the loss they would suffer by not having so many bedrooms would be more than made up by the convenience of the house being something more than a mere dormitory. Anyhow, whatever the cost in favor or patronage, no wise rooming-house proprietor should allow mixed couples in bedrooms.

There are ways of doing everything and I believe that if the matter were explained in a motherly way, not too lengthily or naggingly, right at the beginning, nice girls would respect the prohibition and also come to feel that there is somebody who cares about them to an extent that is not to be merely measured in terms of rent.

The other kind of girl is scarcely worth risking the reputation of your home for, anyhow—I mean the girl who rebels against such kindly and considerate explanation at the very beginning of her stay.

Methodist and Conformist

QUESTION: Why were the Methodists called by that name? What is a Non-conformist?

ANSWER: When John Wesley and his fellow members of the little group at Oxford University began to gather every day for regular prayer and Bible study, they came under a great deal of ridicule. It was a dissolute and godless time. Because they were so regular in the time of their meeting and so strict in the outward discipline of their lives, they were nicknamed *Methodists* and the nickname stuck, right to this day until it has become part of our Methodist glory.

The word Nonconformist does not rightly have any meaning in America. It came into use when Charles II came to the throne of England after the Cromwellian regime had run its course. Charles' chief minister of state was the Earl of Clarendon. He instituted an Act of Parliament in 1662 requiring everybody to subscribe to everything in the Book of Common Prayer. This, the Cromwellian party, consisting of Quakers, Presbyterians, Baptists and what in England are called today the members of the Free Churches, refused to do. They did not conform, so received the name Nonconformists. Sir Harry Vane was one of their leaders. It was due to their sufferings that the original band of Pilgrim fathers and mothers were so strongly recruited in America, in the following fifty years—to the extent of 70,000, I believe.

What Are Thoughts?

QUESTION: Are our thoughts simply bodily activities or do some of them have their source in our spiritual natures?

ANSWER: That has been the question agitating the minds of philosophers since the Greek Age. My own view, of course, is that in addition to the mind and the body, there is a third part of man called the soul. This is a kind of antenna, picking up the stream of ideas that are always flowing from the great central source of all thought—God. The mind translates these ideas into thought and the body translates the thoughts into actions.

The souls are the antennae, the minds are the receiving sets, translating the air waves into sound waves; and the body is the loud speaker, giving the thoughts form and expression in action. That is my own view. I think it is the general Christian view. How else do we account for the phenomenon of a general, a mass movement of thought and progress?

Christianity lived comfortably with slavery for eighteen centuries. Then, almost suddenly, like a breeze from the celestial hills, came a very general consciousness that this thing and the Christian religion were incompatible with each other. In England, first, then in America, that impression became more or less general, finally spreading through the whole Christian world until today, every so-called Christian nation finds it necessary to include the repression of slavery amongst its policies.

Where did that impression come from, except from the Throne of God, first of all; then into the souls of men; then, into their minds and then, through their speech, their swords and guns, translating itself into living and saving action?

The Meaning of Going to the Altar

QUESTION: Do you believe that a man can obtain the spirit of God by just coming forward and giving his hand to the preacher at the altar?

ANSWER: Yes, I do—and, no, I don't. It all depends on the inner emotion and determination of the man who comes forward. It's like a wedding ceremony. If the man getting married is saying in his heart all the while, "All I'm getting married for is to get this woman's money—or to get a comfortable home for myself regardless of her"—or for some other purely selfish reason like that; then, nothing that may be said or done in the marriage ceremony can be worth anything, however sincere the preacher may be. It depends on the disposition of the couple coming to the altar.

It's the same with the Sacrament. There is no virtue in the outward act. It's the heart desire of the man or woman coming to the Sacrament that determines its value.

So with the man coming to the altar making his decision for Christ. If he means that—just that—there is a virtue in the outward act. It defines and marks the inward decision, gives him a date to look back to, gives him an anchor in coming moments of fluctuation to hang on to. But, as a piece of ritual, just meaning nothing of these things, the act, like all other symbolic acts, is valueless—indeed, being hypocritical, it is harmful.

Soul, Spirit and Mind

QUESTION: What is the difference between "soul" and "spirit;" between "mind" and "spirit"?

ANSWER: The Greek word used for spirit is "pneuma" which is the word from which we get the word pneumatic and the word pneumonia. Strictly, it means "breath."

The Greek word for "soul" is the word "psyche," the word from which we make the word "psychology." Strictly, the

word for spirit is used of spirit, in a general way. The word for soul is used to describe that part of the universal spirit which is, so to speak, separated off into a distinct human soul. Just as the Greek word "sarks" is the word for all flesh, while the word "soma" is used for that part of all flesh which happens to be our own or somebody else's body.

The Greek word for mind is "sophos" and means exactly what "mind" means in English; the actively thinking, reasoning element in man.

How to Read the New Testament

QUESTION: What advice about the intelligent reading of the New Testament would you give to a business woman who has little time to spare but does earnestly wish to read her Testament with enjoyment and profit?

ANSWER: That is a very fine question and rejoices me. I fancy it expresses a widespread desire. That is why I have picked it out from the mass this week for more lengthy answer. The most gratifying feature of this Question Box is the new interest it is creating in the New Testament. In almost every letter we get testimony of that.

First, let me say this. It will sound silly but it is not silly. Don't trouble to buy a New Testament until you can afford one with a good type. There are a mighty lot of folk who are sick of the New Testament because their eyes got sick of it first, without their brains knowing it. There is not another book in the world that could have retained its interest under the sort of treatment that Bibles have received from publishers. Think what would happen if either school books or

novels were printed that way. Wait till you can afford a good type. Don't be put off with what you don't want.

Second, don't buy anything that has not marginal readings. I don't mean marginal references but corrections of the text in the margin. I wish I could spend one hour on that alone. Here is one sample reason, however. When the committee of revisers for the New Testament was formed, it was composed of about one-half real Greek scholars and authorities on old manuscripts and about one-half just church dignitaries.

In 1881, the oldest New Testament manuscript was found that made many interesting, and some important, changes in the less old copies of the Gospels. But before a change could be made in the version of 1611—called the King James version—there had to be a two-thirds vote of the committee. The dignitaries were against change and were in continual opposition to the scholars, with the result that the most correct readings, failing of a two-thirds majority, are most often to be found in the margin and not in the text.

If I were you, I would get Moffatt's translation. It is written in modern English and takes account of all the corrections that the discovery of ancient copies of the Gospels have necessitated. Weymouth is almost equally good; but these two are the best for common use.

Then, do this: Confine yourself to St. Mark's Gospel, until you have read it and re-read it. It was the first Gospel written for busy people. Matthew and Luke both copy large portions of it into their Gospels. It is very vivid and attractive in its style. It is short. Stick to Mark.

Then, if you are not too poor, buy Dr. David Smith's book, "The Days of His Flesh." It will cost you four dollars, but it is worth it to anybody who really cares for the understanding of the Bible. Charge it to benevolences, if you like, because benevolences will get the money back some day.

Does Crime Pay?

QUESTION: The street cars have very attractive advertisements showing a very handsome policeman arresting a very poor-looking criminal and entitled, "You Can't Win." If this were true, the advertisement would be unnecessary. Government figures show that only 20% of the crimes are discovered. How can it be true that "You can't win"?

ANSWER: Well, it depends on the viewpoint. It ought to be admitted that, in view of the large number of crook attorneys—the delays in administering justice which are making America the reproach of the whole world—and the feeling that the police are too closely allied with the criminal classes, the bringing of criminals to book is not as successful as it should be in a civilized community.

But even so, "you can't win." You are out of decent society, for one thing. Then, somebody said the other day, that, apart from bootleggers (who are a class by themselves) there was not an ordinary criminal in Chicago worth \$2,000. Then, there must be a certain amount of discomfort in knowing that everybody is looking for you, as the enemy of constituted Society. And, yet again, there is still a thing called Conscience and there is still a Being named God.

The Trinity

QUESTION: You remember Jesus said, "The Father judgeth no man but hath committed all judgment unto the Son." Now, if Jesus is to judge mankind . . . and if he is the creator of all things and powers as St. Paul claimed, is he not the only God?

ANSWER: I don't think we need worry our heads a little bit about the doctrine of the Trinity. Like you, Jesus is God enough for me and I am quite sure that there is no jealousy in the Trinity. So that, even if we did make a mistake in praying over much to one person in the Trinity to the exclusion of the other persons, there would be no harm done.

I think that Christ is the understandable part of the Deity, revealed to us men for that very purpose and we do well to do all we can to understand him. If you feel best able to address yourself to the Son, to the entire exclusion of the Father, I fancy the Father will be honored, rather than otherwise.

Is Gandhi a Christian?

QUESTION: How do you account for the fact that through the influence of Gandhi, the Hindu, and by his methods, he has been the medium through which a great deal of interest in Christ has come and that, through Gandhi, India's program has become one of soul-force instead of armed rebellion? Does this not indicate that there is a danger of putting merely moral folk on a plane with Christianity of the full and definite kind?

ANSWER: So long as we definite Christians—as you call us in your letter—give such a rotten example of what definite Christianity is, it is always very possible for merely moral people to come very near to our level of living. I think that many of these people pass that level, to our discredit. But that, of course, is a reflection against us, not against our faith.

But the fact that Gandhi, modest to a fault, declines to call himself a Christian, is not proof that he is not a Chris-

tian. "By their fruits, ye shall know them," and I should argue that Christ himself may well think the Hindu leader, so sublimely gentle and winsome, is one of the most sincere and influential of his followers on the earth at this time.

Personally, I do not think that church membership—or even the swallowing whole of all our dogma about Christ, is the only test, or the supreme test. The supreme test is in that question of Christ's—"What do ye more than others?"

What Is Paradise?

QUESTION: You said, last week, that the word Paradise had a long and interesting history, which you had no time to tell then. Have you time now? How much do you know, anyhow? Give us the history.

ANSWER: I know about one thousandth part of what I ought to know in order to conduct this Question Box to the satisfaction of myself and one ten-thousandth part of what I ought to know in order to conduct it to the satisfaction of everybody else.

But I do happen to know the history of the word Paradise. It comes from Babylonia, where the Hebrews were exiled. It was used to describe the hanging gardens and other resting places of the Babylonian kings, who, if all that is said about them is true, needed some resting places. But you can see that the word conveyed the idea of a more or less temporary rest, not a permanent one, or a fixed condition.

It was brought back from their exile by the Hebrews, and incorporated into their language to describe the place of the interim resting place of the soul, the Abraham's bosom, where good Jews awaited the final judgment. It was in that sense

that Jesus used it when he said to the thief on the cross, "Today, thou shalt be with me in Paradise."

Can We Prove Faith?

QUESTION: If we have no way of verifying our faith until after death, why should we try to influence other people's religion, lest in doing so we possibly become responsible for their error?

ANSWER: Well, that's a big "If," isn't it? All the really religious people I have met, refuse to acknowledge that "If." I don't know whether or not you are married. If you are married, how do you prove that your wife loves you? If not married, how do you prove that your mother loves you? Not by any process that can be reduced to terms of logic, yet anybody who is greatly loved would say that the proof is stronger than logic, better than any logic can offer, being immediate and convincing in itself.

That is what the really religious people say. I don't mean the professedly religious people, but the undoubted saints. They may be few but they are dead certain, with a deep conviction. There is no "IF"; not with them.

Now, take another argument which I don't like using, however, because of careless hearers. Suppose the Christian form of faith is wrong, what is that dreadful risk that we run by teaching it to folk? Is it destructive of civilization, or an upbuilder of civilization? Is it more moral or less moral than anti-Christian forms of life? Does it induce parents to make home a kinder place for children or a less kindly place? Does it destroy chastity or enhance it?

Suppose we are wrong about immortality and that there is no immortality. Then, we shall all be everlastingly dead

anyway. Who has lost anything then, by any false belief in their lifetime about immortality?

During your lifetime, you gain immensely by faith, anyway, quite apart from the truth of the thing you believe. Faith is fire, says Browning in "Bishop Blougram's Apology"; while disbelief is ice. It makes a chill in the air and anemia in the blood. It destroys social enthusiasm. What's the use of anything if Christ doesn't live; if there is to be no final vindication for righteousness?

But, of course, that has nothing to do with my own conviction of the fact that Christ does live, and act, and love our lives. That conviction is absolute and unshakable.

The Kingdom Both In and Amongst Us

QUESTION: To whom did Jesus speak in Luke 17 the 21st verse? Did he say that the Kingdom of God was within them or among them?

ANSWER: Jesus was distinctly speaking to the Pharisees. The whole passage reads: "And being asked by the Pharisees, when the Kingdom of God cometh, he answered them and said, The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation; neither shall they say, Lo, here! or Lo, there! for, lo, the Kingdom of God is within you."

Now, he may have meant that it was within the Pharisees. I suppose that is your difficulty. But look at it. It is possible that there are all kinds of hidden potentialities within everybody if they would develop them. He may have meant that it was like that with the indwelling Kingdom of God.

But I don't think he meant that. You are quite right in your letter when you say that the English translation is some-

times confusing. Moffatt says that it means that the "reign of God is in your midst"—in the midst of you. That is better because the Greek preposition for "in" also means "amongst." He himself was amongst them and where the King is, there is the Kingdom, of course.

Is the Book of Job Biography?

QUESTION: Do you regard the Book of Job as biography or as pure drama?

ANSWER: I like to think that the Book of Job is both biography and drama. Of course, it must be drama, being so deeply concerned with the counsels that took place in Heaven between God and Satan. But my own private thought about it is that the first chapter is either the story of a real man and his sufferings or else the story of the sufferings of several men gathered, so to speak, into one life.

There is no doubt about the real biographical character of that first chapter, in the sense that there is nothing humanly impossible about the things that so tragically happened to Job. They have all happened to somebody, even if no one man has suffered them all. Even that is possible of belief to anybody who saw the piling up of tragedy that took place in some English and French homes during the War.

But the rest is drama and drama of the most wonderful and vivid kind. Nowhere else in literature is the problem of evil so powerfully argued. Of course, the problem is not completely answered in Job, any more than it is in any other literature of any nation. That is because the problem is not intended by God to be completely answered. That is where the need for faith comes in. Without suffering, there would be little incentive to belief.

Sin---Notorious and Covered

QUESTION: What does I Timothy, chapter 5, verse 24 mean when it says that some men's sins go before unto judgment?

ANSWER: Here is Dr. Moffatt's translation of the verse you mention: "Some men's sins are notorious and call for judgment, but in some cases, sin only comes out afterwards." I hope that makes it plain. We English readers suffer much through the changes in the English language since the times when King James' Version was given to the world in 1611. That is why we owe such a great debt to men like Moffatt, Weymouth and Goodspeed for their sincere and scholarly attempts to bring the New Testament, especially, back from the studies of the scholars to the life and speech of the common man, where it really belongs.

It needs to be emphasized again and again that the New Testament was not written by scholars for scholars but by working men for working men. Nobody is making us see that as clearly as Dr. Adolf Deissmann, and in his recent book "Paul" he describes what kind of a man Paul was, what calloused hands his were, and why and how he prepared his letters to the slaves and humble folk, making what he called "large letters" because the hand that had been working at the loom all day could not make smaller ones. But all that is by the way.

Importunity In Prayer

QUESTION: In Luke's Gospel, chapter 18, Christ likens God to an unjust judge. What does this mean?

ANSWER: It means several things. The first of them is that the government of the Universe is personal, if Jesus

knows anything about it. Being the only-begotten Son of the Father, he may be supposed to know—the pseudo-scientists notwithstanding. That being the case, the government of the Universe may be affected by the prayer of those who are sufficiently interested in the government of the Universe to interpose their prayers.

Christ does not liken God to an unjust judge, however, except for purposes of illustration. Everywhere and all the time, Christ insists that God is our Father. That being so, he constantly urges us to make our requests known to Him—and not known merely but insistently and importunately known. In two very lengthy passages in Luke's Gospel, he impresses the value of importunity upon his disciples. In the eleventh chapter, he tells the story of the man who came to his friend for some loaves at midnight. The friend was in bed and the night was cold. He did not want to become chilled. But the importunate friend kept on knocking. There were children in the house and so, rather than make matters worse by waking the baby, he gave to his friend as many as he wanted of the loaves he had.

Now, in the eighteenth chapter, Christ changes the illustration but insists on the same fact of the value of insistent prayer. He tells a story of a widow who lived in a town where the judge was unjust. The original is very dramatic. It says that she clutched the robe of the judge and kept on nagging at him. So that, at last—just because she was a nuisance—he gave her the judgment.

All this is, of course, very unmodern and very unscientific. But we have to make up our minds whether the "only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father," has revealed Him or whether we must leave the matter of deciding whether prayer is possible to the scientific people. Christ insisted that the government of the Universe was the government of a family. If that is so, then prayer—importunate prayer—has its place.

Jesus and His Mother

QUESTION: Why did Jesus treat his mother with so much indifference in public life?

ANSWER: Four times, as you say, he is referred to in the Gospels as being with his mother—at the time of the Temple visit, he was surprised at her anxiety at losing him. That may indicate something. That he did not neglect her is indicated by the fact that he is not only called “The Carpenter’s Son” but “The Carpenter,” indicating that after the death of Joseph, he became the support of the family, inheriting the care of the family that Joseph had left behind.

I am not so sure as you are that she understood her first-born son. She was one of those who thought he had gone mad. See Mark III, 21 and 31.

In spite of the apparent aloofness which he showed at Cana, you should notice that his mother did not seem to be rebuffed. She says, “Whatever he says unto thee, do it.”

Twice he is translated as merely addressing her as “Woman.” If this is the cause of your feeling about him, it may be removed immediately to the extent that the word he used was “gunai,” best translated as Madam or Lady.

The fact that he gave her into the care of John at the Crucifixion is some indication that his brothers were either unable to or undesirous of supporting her. She may have previously sided with them against him as Mark III seems to indicate. We do not read of them having any interest in his doings until after the Resurrection, in the interval just before Pentecost. See Acts I, 14.

Don’t you think it is very hard for us to transport ourselves into the atmosphere of the first century and its different relations between the sexes, even between mothers and sons? And don’t you think that we are all a little affected by Mariolatry, even the most Protestant amongst us? It may

have been that the mother of Jesus was a very simple peasant and a very misunderstanding one, even until the Resurrection or near it.

What Does Selah Mean?

QUESTION: Would you mind telling me what the word "Selah" at the end of some of the verses of the Psalms means? Has it any modern significance?

ANSWER: I believe that Hebrew scholars are still at outs with themselves concerning the meaning of Selah. Where that is the case, we ordinary folk may well leave the matter as one that does not involve salvation. The fundamentally important things in the Scriptures are plain and commonly understood. It is only the things that are relatively unimportant that are obscure.

I think, however, that "Selah" is generally understood to have been a musical sign for the guidance of the cantor, like the "crescendo" sign in modern music, for instance. Some scholars think it was a sign that the instrumental accompaniment should take up the strain. Others think that it meant that the congregation should repeat. Anyhow, it has no significance for the ordinary reader.

Is Freemasonry Christian?

QUESTION: Is the Masonic Lodge a Christian organization? There are hosts of men belonging to this lodge who never enter a church nor do they profess Christianity.

ANSWER: That is a very good question. As I happen to be a Mason, having been chaplain of a lodge for many

years, let me say that I am quite satisfied that the Free and Accepted Order of Master Masons is an organization founded on Christian principles. It is the largest philanthropic order in the world. It is one of the few orders which overleap our narrowly nationalistic boundaries, and embraces men of every color, every nation, every language. The Bible is its guide. In the lower branches, the Old Testament predominates in influence. But in the higher orders, the New Testament comes into fuller significance.

There is nothing un-Christian in secret societies. The early Christians belonged to secret burial guilds and the catacombs are the result of those secret burials. As you know, they are largely filled with early Christian graves, proving the close connection between early Christianity and the Roman secret societies. The Masons, however, do not regard themselves so much as a secret society as a society with secrets. The big secret of them all is the secret of their fine brotherliness.

Of course, there are hosts of Masons who never enter church. That is a serious reflection on themselves, not on Masonry, though my personal opinion is that official Masonry, in the local lodges, does not sufficiently insist on this aspect of the question.

About a Mason professing Christianity—he is not required to in the lower branches. What he is required to do, however, is to profess to a belief in God. But in the higher branches, he is supposed to be a professing Christian also, and is a hypocrite if he is not. But the number of hypocrites in any organization should not let us lose the fact of the essential value of the organization itself.

Are Illegitimate Babies Damned?

QUESTION: Would you teach that the fact that a man and woman are unmarried makes their off-

spring a baby damned from its birth—as so many try to teach?

ANSWER: Mind you, my answer is going to shock some people. There was never a baby born yet who was damned in a spiritual sense because it was not conceived or born in wedlock. To state the contrary, offends the very spirit of Jesus, because it is casting a stone in the path of one of his little ones.

Moreover, I doubt very much whether illicit conception really damages the baby physically. Babies are born much more healthy and free from taint than we are willing to admit. It is being questioned whether even syphilis is inborn. It is an outside infection that may begin to infect the baby at the moment of birth, but it is not inborn in the baby.

That, however, is another question. What I repeat is that it is blasphemy against the very spirit and teaching of Jesus that children are ever born to be damned because of something their parents did. It doesn't matter whether it is a church or an individual who teaches the contrary; that teaching is one of the fundamental lies that God will not easily forgive.

That does not excuse illicit relationships. But even there, Society is sometimes much more to blame than the individual young fools who do the silly thing. When Society is responsible for a rotten state of economics that makes the marriage of young lovers impossible, then Society must carry some of the load of responsibility.

An Obstinate Husband and Father

QUESTION: *I don't want to risk, in any way, the fine confidence which this troubled lady has placed in me. So I have not stated her question. You must read between the lines.*

ANSWER: This lady's daughter has fallen into sin. Her father regards it as a sin so grievous that he wants her sent away from home. The mother thinks—and I agree with her—that any harshness now might drive her daughter deeper into shame. That poor girl must be kept in an atmosphere of parental love in order to save her from worse things than have yet befallen her.

The difficulty is the obstinate husband. It generally is. He is wrong and in grave danger of offending the Holy Spirit by his attitude of unholy righteousness. Sins of the flesh are undoubtedly sinful but they are no more sinful than sins of the spirit. A hard and glassy self-righteousness is, perhaps, the worst sin of all and has driven more folk into the hell of a deep despair than all the sins of the flesh put together.

I think that your daughter ought to marry the boy if, after this experience, she is quite sure she loves him. That is the only reason for marriage, anyway. There must be no marrying just to save her face or to help the reputation of her father. Love is the only justification for marriage, hard as it is to say that just now.

Love of home is going to save your daughter now and love of her baby, afterwards. Destroy either of them and you destroy her. Not even your love for your husband must allow you to do that.

I don't know what further advice to give you. It's very hard to advise a wife to defy her husband. I don't know that, in his present mood, home would be very homelike for your daughter. His pride is the chief trouble. Perhaps he is feeling that he will suffer in the eyes of his fellow citizens. If so, why not get a few of the best men and women you know to talk to him and convince him that he would win the reproach of decent people if he did not deal lovingly with his daughter.

That doesn't mean that either you or he are going to be what I am afraid I must call "sloppy" with her. I don't mean that. There must be no palliation of her fault. But it is not an irreparable fault and the temptations that girls are suffering nowadays in some environments are terrible. Love and prayer will show you the way. God bless you. If you ask me, I'll write your husband but I think you can handle him best.

Can Divorced Folk Be Saved?

QUESTION: I have been in bed for eleven weeks with tuberculosis. I am so thankful for the radio and wish every home could know about your Question Box. I am worried by this question: Can a person who has been divorced and remarried ever be saved? I was divorced from a man not fit to live with.

ANSWER: I take you at your word. You say your first husband was not fit to live with. Christ does not require us to live with folk not fit to live with. That is to say, not with folk that are unfit to live with most of the time. But even if he had been fit to live with, there is no way that I know of undoing what has been done.

Don't stop to ask yourself whether you can be saved. You are saved; listen to me—*are* saved, not will be. So is everybody who lives under the wings of God, if I may put it like that. You don't have to do anything but just live in the certainty that because of the infinite love of God, especially for folk who are sick with tuberculosis or in any kind of fear or sorrow, you have an infinite shelter from all things that would hurt or destroy you.

Being a Good Soldier of Jesus Christ

QUESTION: What do you understand Paul to mean in Second Epistle to Timothy, second chapter, and twelfth verse, when he says, "If we endure, we shall also reign with him. If we deny him, he will also deny us."

ANSWER: I think he means exactly what he says. The change that I made from your word "suffer" to my word "endure" is the change which the Revised and, I believe, the Standard Version makes. You should read the whole chapter. The days of persecution are beginning. Paul is in a Roman prison, perhaps on the eve of execution. The persecuting tendency is spreading like a thunder cloud. Timothy will soon be left alone to keep the churches constant even in dire disaster. His is a terribly responsible post and a seriously frightening trust. Demas has already run away. The need is for the kind of man that that Roman soldier at Herculaneum was—who refused to retire without orders, even though the mountain was belching fire.

Christ did it, enduring the cross, despising the shame. The servant is not above his master, or the disciple above his Lord. If we run away from him who did not run away, he will not recognize us as his soldiers. If, however, we stand fast, like good soldiers, we shall enter into his rest and rewards.

Transubstantiation

QUESTION: Do the verses in St. John's Gospel, chapter six and verses 52-58, give any warrant for believing in the Transubstantiation of the elements in the Holy Communion?

ANSWER: The dogma of Transubstantiation is the teaching that by the word of the priest, the bread and wine used in the Holy Communion are changed in their substance from bread and wine to flesh and blood of Christ. You say that some Lutheran Synods hold to the dogma of Transubstantiation. I think not, but the dogma of Consubstantiation is so very like it, that I do not wonder at laymen making the mistake of supposing that Lutherans believe in Transubstantiation.

Now the question arises in your letter whether Jesus in the chapter you named—the sixth chapter of St. John—taught that. It is largely a matter of opinion and, I think, entirely depends upon whether your mind was built after the very literalistic pattern of the German mind, or after the more mystical pattern of the French or the British. If the latter, you will say that when Jesus said, “Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, ye have not life in yourselves,” he was speaking allegorically, mystically, figuratively. If the former, then you will say that he literally meant every syllable he said.

But I should point out, I think, that he always did speak in parables; that Orientals, such as Jesus was, always do; that his hearers were quite accustomed to this form of speech; that they understood him to be speaking figuratively, because his body was still unbroken before them.

To myself, the idea that we feed on Jesus Christ in our stomachs always seems the depth of rather brutish literalness and I am quite free to say that I do not understand it. In the Communion Service, we say, “Feed on Christ in thy Heart”—thy heart—which expresses for me the mystical fact that all our life is derived from Christ, that we do live on him, very dependently, day by day and that our partaking of the Holy Communion is our testimony to that fact of an inward life derived from him.

What Is the Lord's Supper?

QUESTION: What is the difference between the teaching of the Lutheran churches and that of the Roman church regarding the Eucharist? Would you, at the same time, mind stating your own view?

ANSWER: I am not a specialist concerning the various theories of the various churches regarding the real presence of Christ at the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Briefly, as I understand it, the difference between the Roman and the Lutheran view of the Real Presence at the Sacrament is the difference between two words much used at the time of the controversy in the days of the Reformation.

The Roman view is expressed by the word, "Transubstantiation"; the idea being that the elements, the bread and the wine, are converted in their substance into the actual body and blood of Christ. The Lutheran view, as I understand it, is expressed by the word "Consubstantiation" which conveys that together with the bread and wine, the body of Christ and his blood are there. There is no change in the elements but along with them goes the body and blood of Christ whether the partaker is a believer or not. If he is a believer, then he partakes of these to his profit; if he is not a believer, then he partakes of them to his destruction.

Neither position expresses my view, which is expressed very largely by the Rubric of the Episcopal Church, contained in its Prayer Book, which says "The body of Christ is given, taken and eaten, only after a heavenly and spiritual manner. And the means whereby the body of Christ is received and eaten in the Supper is by Faith." That is to say, I believe that the Christian life is, so to speak, one long Eucharist in that, just as the branch derives its life from the central stem and root of the vine, so does the believer receive all that is

really life through Christ. The Sacrament is to me the parable and symbol of that daily and hourly partaking, its outward and visible expression.

Is the Pope Christ's Vicar?

QUESTION: Do you believe that the Pope of Rome is the representative of Jesus Christ on earth?

ANSWER: I have announced before that I must refuse to answer questions that create controversy between Protestant and Catholic and between Jew and Gentile. There are too many things uniting us to emphasize the things that divide us.

But I will say this about the Pope of Rome; just to the degree that he is a Christian man, so is the Pope Christ's representative here. I think the Pope is a very good man, so I think he is Christ's real representative. And just in the same degree is that true of you or me. We are Christ's representatives just as we reflect Christ in our lives.

Birth Control

QUESTION: What is your view concerning birth control?

ANSWER: My view on birth control is like my view on divorce. It entirely depends on the individual circumstances. I know cases where both would be a crime. I know cases where neither would be a crime. And my clinical work gives me a list of many cases of both kinds. I refuse to dogmatize in this matter as in most others.

In the circumstances quoted in the letter from which this question comes, I should not have the slightest hesitation

in endorsing it. Five children in six years. Three dead. A husband who is tubercular and a wife who is a semi-invalid already. If those are the facts, as represented, there is not a good woman or a good man with any common sense who would not endorse birth control.

But there are other cases, and because this is a question that is much discussed nowadays, I propose, with some plainness of speech to discuss the question from some other angles than that presented in the letter I refer to. So far as the sinfulness of birth control is concerned, the greatest social sin—the only social sin, for the matter of that—is selfishness. And, in many cases, birth control is a very malignant form of selfishness and nothing more.

I've just been reading Edwin Balmer's splendid novel, "The Breath of Scandal" and I entirely agree with the author that a woman who marries, deliberately intending not to have children, even though there are no economic or physical reasons why she should not, is cheating herself and the Universe for purely selfish ends. To substitute Boston puppies for children is a sin against the human race. Whether a woman has children or not, she owes it to Society to exercise her maternal instincts for the human race for some beneficent and ministering end—in a direct form and not merely indirectly, by means of a check-book.

I have been reading some interesting statistics which ought to alarm all lovers of humanity. They apply to England chiefly, but I fancy they would be much more true of America, in spite of the fact that all information concerning contraception is illegal here, though legal in England since the famous trial of Dr. Marie Stopes about six years ago. I'm going to take a little time with this because my mail illustrates to me that it is a matter of burning public interest and of wide social import.

Here is what the British Weekly of October 20, 1927, says about present-day conditions in England:

“No modern movement has had a greater effect on marriage and morals than Birth Control—the discussion of which is everywhere free and unfettered. It used to be said that when God sent a mouth, he sent the food to fill it. Nobody believes that now and nobody is prepared to act upon it. The limitation of the family is a generally accepted fact and we already see the result in the rapidly falling birth rate. If the birth rate of fifty years ago prevailed in Europe today, there would be two and one-half millions more babies born in the year. The British birth rate is now the lowest in Europe with the exception of Sweden.

In 1920—before the Stopes’ trial—957,000 babies were born. In 1926, with a larger number of parents of suitable age, only 694,000 babies were born. The drop in six years was 263,000 births, or over 27 per cent. The birth rate of the better educated classes in France is 30 per cent above that of the corresponding groups of England. Birth Control now amounts to an obsession with many women. In 1926 and 1927, the women of the Liberal and Labor parties passed resolutions on the subject in face of the opposition of the party leaders. The tragic side of the movement is that the widespread knowledge of contraception has led to much immorality amongst unmarried men and women.”

Those are the effects so far as England is concerned. I fancy it is only fair to say that the declining birth rate may be due to other causes, also; amongst them a severe condition of unemployment from which England is only just recovering. It is also true, of course, that England can survive for a very long time with a lower birth rate than she had previously. Her emigration statistics prove that, though, on the other hand, Dr. Allinson showed when I was a boy that

her land could support many more persons by intensive culture of the soil than at present.

But it may not be a good thing for civilization in general and for America, in particular, when the Northern European countries produce just enough population to keep themselves going. America owes a great debt to Swedish immigrants, for instance, not merely in the fact that they have reclaimed much territory from the prairie, but—with the other nations of Northern Europe—have contributed the best factors to our American Christian civilization. Birth Control is confined to those northern types almost exclusively, both in their native lands and in this country.

What are to be the religious and moral effects of that? That is the big, the serious question. Is the America of the future to be Southern European or Northern European in the next twenty years? Some years ago, Mr. and Mrs. Meyrick Booth published a book on Rudolf Eucken. Here are some extracts from that book:

“The enormous decline in the birth rate which has taken place of recent years in Great Britain is seen to possess a significance which is not only social, political and economic, but philosophical and religious, also; for these classes will carry with them into extinction the moral and spiritual beliefs of which they are the representatives. Of this process, the United States affords a good example; the decay of Puritanism in that country has been brought about not so much by any intellectual rejection of its beliefs as by the almost universally drastic restriction of the family amongst the Puritan stocks, which are thus being swamped by the other European stocks which came into the country later and which are much more prolific; the victory has been not to intellectual considerations but to basic life processes and the type of spiritual reality they express.”

I hope I am not wearying you, but we are dealing with fundamentals and I am very anxious to emphasize their implications. The writers continue:

"If, for example, we regard the educated Protestant Anglo-Saxon as the bearer of a specific type of belief and morality, there can be no doubt (even supposing the present birth rate to be maintained, which seems improbable) that this type is destined to virtually disappear within the next four or five generations. For throughout the English-speaking world the birth rate is probably more than 20% lower than the death rate amongst the more highly educated classes. . . . The upgoing class consists, in the main, of Roman Catholics, in all social grades, some foreign stocks and the lower classes in general. . . . We obtain the astounding results that, after not more than four generations, 1,000 couples taken from the former section (Puritan Anglo-Saxon stocks) will be represented by 190 individuals; which amounts almost to extinction; while 1,000 Roman Catholic couples will have given rise to 6,000 descendants. These figures (though only roughly worked out)—say the writers—will convey some idea of the startling changes in belief and thought which may take place as a result of a differential birth rate operating even for a few generations only."

I think we ought to remember that one of those four generations has already passed since that book was written. I believe, too, that we are already seeing some of the results in the cities of America.

This is the longest answer I have ever given to a question through the microphone. I have given it at such length, without touching on some other effects, like the growing degree or proportion of selfish people in the population, because it is one of the questions of the day.

There is, of course, another side. The woman has a right that has not been admitted until recently, to her own body,

with all that that implies. There are individual questions that can only be settled by individual treatment and advice at the hands of experts of Christian outlook and sound judgment. But, as I have said, my personal mail gives some very striking instances of the prevalence of the perfectly shocking need of sane leadership in this matter, just as Judge Ben Lindsey is showing the danger of a sincerely good man becoming obsessed in his mind by too frequent and concentrated thought on this one problem.

Will the World Become Roman Catholic?

QUESTION: Do you think the whole world will ever become Roman Catholic or do you think the moral influence of the Catholic church has failed to register? What constructive policy do you favor for Protestants, many of whom admit a waning of popular interest in their churches? I am a member of no church, though I criticise no man for his church affiliations and ask these questions in all sincerity.

ANSWER: I am a Protestant because I believe that Protestantism fits my temperament. Your question arises because of what I said about Birth Control last week. I then said that it was being demonstrated that Birth Control was chiefly affecting the Protestant stocks and was therefore tending to increase the proportion of Catholic units in the population. That, of course, is true. I did not say whether I thought it was good or bad.

Naturally, being a Protestant, I think it is not likely to be for the perpetuation of the truly American—or, at any

rate, the historic American type of civilization. I do not think that the choice between Catholicism and Protestantism is a choice between good and bad.

I do not love the hierarchic side of either Catholicism or Protestantism and believe that the religion of the average member of any church is a more vital thing than its expression through the leaders of that church; using the word church in its large sense and not as applied to the local group of worshippers. In that sense, I am not a good Protestant. I refuse to denounce the Catholics, and the breathings of threatening and slaughter against Catholics by Protestants is just as distasteful and, I believe, harmful, as the breathings of threatenings and slaughters against Protestants by Catholics. Neither is in accord with the spirit of that Jesus whom they both profess to follow.

I do not think that the world will become wholly Catholic, because of two factors. The first is that there are two forces in nature, as every engineer knows. The one is centrifugal and the other is centripetal. The one is the tendency to centralization, and in religion, it takes the form of reliance on the authority of a church in matters of faith. It is represented by Catholicism and the High Church party in Episcopalianism.

The other is a de-centralizing tendency, seeking ever a wider liberty of thought and judgment in matters of faith and conduct. It is expressed—or *was* expressed by Protestantism. The two tendencies will always be at work, in religion as in physics and thus, something akin to Catholicism and something akin to Protestantism will always be the broad divisions of religion.

Now, Protestantism is undoubtedly declining today throughout the world, and, chiefly, I think, because it is becoming too Catholic and is not sufficiently Protestant—I do not mean, in the bigoted sense of active antagonism to Catholicism. I

mean that Protestantism does not stand for liberty of thought and respect for individual judgment as it once did. Protestantism is just as regimented and Protestant thought is just as much in harness today as Catholic thought.

The sturdy independence of judgment of the old Protestant is gone. There are growing up, in a very un-Protestant way, church codes of thinking about everything under the sun, from the way you wear your hat to whether you should smoke cigarettes, if a member of either sex. Protestant people no longer read their Bible for themselves. They take their Bible knowledge direct from the preacher who is thus forced by them, very much against his own will, to become their priest, to that degree. Now, I think that is bad for America and means the destruction of the old American ideals because America was created on a basis of human liberty and independence of judgment.

I am not able to estimate what is the moral influence of the Catholic Church. I do not know what strength of passion it has to direct and control amongst the South European stocks it largely represents. I fancy the warm blood of the South is more passionate than our more Northern bloods. If so, in the sphere of morals, the Roman Catholic Church has a harder task than the churches of the North which are largely Protestant.

I am as amazed as anybody that the Catholic clergy do not succeed in stopping the gunplay and other deep crimes in this city; such crime being most notoriously perpetrated amongst the descendants of South European and Catholic stocks. But, as I have said, I do not know what resistance there is to the discipline of that church in the blood and temperament of the masses of their people.

I certainly refuse to blame the Catholic priesthood for the decline of Protestantism. If Protestantism dies, it will be because it deserves to die. Every organization, whether it be

a nation or a lodge, dies when the strong conviction that gave it birth dies under it. No organization has ever died because of attacks from outside. Quite the contrary.

But I do not think that Protestantism will die, though it looks like it just now to those who face the facts and are not hoodwinked by statistics. We shall see a revival of individual independence within the Protestant churches. Men, some day soon, will refuse to accept ready-made, "hand-me-down" opinions. This Question Box is intended to be a step in that direction. It is an attempt to assist men and women to think for themselves.

Roman Catholicism and the High Church Party

QUESTION: What, in the main, are the distinctions between the Anglo-Catholic and Roman Catholic Churches? Do they both recognize the infallibility of the Pope?

ANSWER: The Anglo-Catholic Church is, of course the High Church party of the Anglican and Protestant Episcopal Church. It had its inception in the fifties of the nineteenth century, under the leadership of Dr. Pusey of Oxford and of Cardinal Newman while he was still an Anglican clergyman. The infallibility of the Pope was not made a dogma of the Roman Catholic Church until the day before war was declared between Germany and France in 1870. You will be interested to know that the vote was taken during the most severe thunderstorm that the city of Rome has ever experienced.

The whole bone of contention between the High Church and the Low Church party in the churches I have named is

this: What were the practises and usages of the English Church in the second year of the reign of King Edward VI—a purely historical question, made very foggy by the fact that the documents are few and doubtful.

I do not know whether the High Church party now accept the infallibility of the Pope. If they do, there is little distinction between them and the Roman Catholic Church. Both believe in the celibacy of the clergy, both believe in the Transubstantiation of the Elements of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper; both believe in the Confessional and in that form of Apostolic Succession accepted by the Roman Catholic Church; that is, that the gift of ordination conveys with it some gift, some special gift derived through St. Peter. Many of the clergy of the High Church party have accepted, more or less secretly, the ordination by the Papal authorities; thus making themselves sure of real ordination, being ordained in both churches.

What Is Meekness?

QUESTION: Jesus said, Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. What did he mean by "meek"?

ANSWER: Well, he didn't mean namby-pamby, because he was not that himself. Folks forget the Jesus who made the whip of cords. There was a lot of real he-man-nishness about Jesus of Nazareth and a great power of moral indignation.

I saw the best definition the other day of meekness. Strangely enough, it was in an English newspaper. It defined meekness, in the sense that Jesus used it, as unassumingness—and that strikes me as a good definition. Everybody gives way to the unassuming people. The children

make friends with them. It is a very precious and much to be envied gift.

The working man, who shuts up like an oyster at any assumption of pride, opens the wonderful secrets of his handicraft to the unassuming. Their difference wins them friends everywhere. They enjoy what they have because they have no bitterness for what they do not have. In a very real and precious sense, they inherit the earth. No millionaire owns such treasures. They are the folk without false pride or foolish envy and so they enter into their universal inheritance.

It is so frequently true of a man's treasures, that they own him, rather than he them. Not so, with these meek persons, upon whom Jesus had his eye. He himself owned nothing yet I venture to think that he got more out of the beauty of the evening sky than most of us do, and would have revelled in a good picture as much as any millionaire possessor of a dozen Old Masters. We need to learn from him to revel in our Universal possessions.

Invoking the Aid of the Saints?

QUESTION: Where is the Biblical authority for Catholics invoking the help of the Virgin in their praying. My husband, who is a Catholic, does this and I argue with him against it.

ANSWER: I cannot imagine why Protestant wives want to argue with Catholic husbands or any other kind of husbands about anything. It is a practice which I heartily condemn. It's a different matter, of course, when husbands argue with wives.

But seriously, why risk the love and peace of your home by arguing about your husband's religious practises? There

is no Biblical authority for invoking the Virgin but there is no Biblical authority against it. Thank God, madam, that your husband prays at all and cease from criticising the manner of his prayer. Jews pray with their hats on. Moham-medans pray prostrate. Many Protestants, as I see them, pray while they watch the style of the other woman's hat. There seem to be different methods of praying.

So long as it is prayer, the method is only of secondary importance and any help to devotion is quite legitimate, according to the temperament and training of the person praying. Christ suggests that we all *pray* ignorantly and says that some ask for scorpions when they need eggs and for serpents when they need fish.

If our Heavenly Father were less loving than he is, we might be punished by getting what we prayed for. Fortunately, all the crooked lines of prayer are straightened as they pass through the intercessory personality of Christ.

I think I have told my radio friends before that an Indian Army officer told me that he once attended a Masonic banquet where many castes dined together but at different tables. That was necessary because of that strange caste system. But they did all dine within the same room and in the same brotherly atmosphere. That was the important fact.

I have just seen the review of a book devoted to a consideration of the prayer life of World Leaders. Some lived in the fifteenth century, some in the twentieth. Some were Catholics, like St. Teresa. Some were rather severely Protestant, like Mrs. Beecher Stowe. The reviewer points out that though a great gulf might seem to divide St. Teresa from Harriet Beecher Stowe, they are singularly alike in their praying, both in the manner and in the matter of their praying.

So it is. We are nearest to each other when we are nearest to the Divine. When all men are facing the sun, they are all facing each other, though half a world away. But argu-

ment, especially in the home life, about praying does *not* bring us nearer. It is almost an act of trespass. Instead, join your husband in his praying, using your own method of approach and, when you do so, don't forget to thank God you have a husband who prays at all.

Veracity of the Gospels

QUESTION: How can we be sure that Jesus actually spoke the words attributed to him in the Gospels?

ANSWER: It was centuries and centuries before men committed their memory of words spoken to writing. It was still somewhat uncommon in the East when Jesus was in the flesh, as it is there today. The verbal memory of men is much better trained by that condition than it is among us and there are some very remarkable instances of verbal perfection, running to the length of repeating what would require many pages to print.

But the method of Jesus was to amplify the words spoken to the public in private discussion with his disciples. The story of what happened in the case of the parable of the sower, told in the thirteenth chapter of Matthew, is an instance of that and illustrates how the impression would be stamped on the minds of the disciples.

Another instance of the authenticity of the words of Jesus is that when they are unfavorable to anybody, they are still faithfully recorded, as in the case of Peter being called Satan by Christ. If the record had been written up, so to speak, that kind of thing would not have appeared.

It is quite possible, however, that the whole of what we call the Sermon on the Mount was not all given to the people at

the same time. It may have been a summary of the general teaching of Jesus gathered together into one place. That is how Luke seems to treat it.

There is a great deal of evidence that various accounts of what Jesus said were checked and corrected. Matthew's and Luke's Gospels are largely copied from Mark's Gospel, even to the very words.

The statement at the end of the seventh chapter of Matthew, that he taught as one having authority and not as the scribes seems to indicate that the impression his words made was very indelible. Remember that all teaching was oral, by constant repetition—and that thus, very perfect verbal memories were obtained. That was a good question.

Was the World Roman Catholic Until Luther?

QUESTION: Is it true that Peter was the first Pope of Rome and that the whole world was Roman Catholic until Martin Luther?

ANSWER: Here is a brief answer to your question, just to illustrate how absurd is the kind of thing you have been told. There is not the slightest evidence in the New Testament that Peter was ever in Rome, though there are some traditions. But tradition, by which I mean legend, is not history by any means.

Peter is in Jerusalem until the twelfth chapter of Acts when he disappears from the story. The church is existing then, before Rome had even been approached by the Christian evangelists. How could it be Roman Catholic at its beginning?

As for England being Catholic until Martin Luther, have you ever heard of John Wycliffe? England was evangelized,

not from Rome but from Scotland and Ireland. It was centuries after Columba and Patrick preached Christ there that Augustine came to the little tip of England now called Kent with a Roman mission. But I should have to write a whole history to answer your question. Read John Richard Green's *Short History of the English People* for the story of religion of England. It will show you that the English kings refused the domination of the Popes long before Martin Luther, and long before the divorce of Henry the Eighth, which was the occasion of the English Reformation.

Peter's Denial and Judas' Betrayal

QUESTION: What made Peter deny Christ and what made Judas betray him?

ANSWER: Fear made Peter deny Christ—fear coupled with hunger, cold and sleeplessness. He was frightened—a northern peasant in the metropolis of his nation. He had not slept much the night before. The night was cold and he was foolish enough to make his face visible in the light of that courtyard fire. Then, like all married men, he was afraid of women and that servant maid just terrified him.

The tradition that Mark's Gospel was written at Peter's dictation, together with the fact that this Gospel gives us the most detailed account of Peter's denial—especially, of his use of bad language—should give us added assurance of the veracity of Mark's Gospel, at least. If Mark could so faithfully tell the disadvantageous facts, the probability that he told the other facts faithfully is that much stronger.

With Judas, it was different. I have little doubt that Judas, the only southerner in the Twelve—all the southerners being turbulent and desirous of throwing off the Roman yoke—had thought at the beginning that Jesus would develop

into a military emancipator. When he saw that was not to happen, he became sour and critical. John says explicitly that he was a thief and that kind of man, with that kind of disappointed disposition, was an easy prey to the bribery of the Jewish officials.

The best thing about him was that he hanged himself. I mean by that, he was not so far gone that he could not feel remorse. It just shows, in his case as in Peter's, that

There's so much bad in the best of us,
And so much good in the worst of us,
That it ill becomes the best of us,
To say much against the rest of us.

That Younger Generation

QUESTION: What do you think of the increasing attention to dress that seems to characterize the younger generation?

ANSWER: I don't think you are fair to us older folk when you give the younger generation all the credit for an increasing attention to dress. Perhaps you did not wish to give anybody credit for it all. Perhaps you thought it a matter for criticism. Anyhow, keep away from this young people stuff. I'm told that sixty per cent of the clients of the beauty parlors are over forty-five and the reducing experts are certainly not making their fortunes from those under twenty. We are all making more efforts than ever to look well and it is all to the good.

Plato said that "discord and absence of grace are as nearly allied to ill words and ill nature, as grace and harmony are the sisters of goodness and virtue."

By discord, he meant bad manners, and by absence of grace, he meant neglect of the appearance. So, what he

really said was that neglect of the appearance was nearly always allied with bad manners and that a pride of appearance was allied with grace and courtesy of character.

I believe that is true. We are members of a widening circle of civilized beings. We have to live in the same world with them. I fancy we owe it to them to look as agreeable to them as we can, both to their eye and to their jaded spirits.

What a blessing it is during torrid days to meet a sanely dressed, well poised girl who, in spite of the heat, just refuses to be limp and beaten by it. She is making a real contribution to our general well-being and I feel like cheering every such girl I meet.

That must not be understood to be a defense of the foolish overdressing or overcoloring that characterizes the young folk in a few instances—and some of the other folk who would like us to think them young.

Should Parents Be Strict?

QUESTION: I am the mother of a son and daughter and am many times perplexed just to know how strict to be, so as to retain their love and respect, and still have a high standard for their good. Don't you think it is a much more difficult task to bring up young people in the way of right today than it was twenty-five years ago?

ANSWER: There is a saying that my mother was accustomed to use about old maids' children and bachelors' wives. I forget the rest of it but the effect of the whole saying was that it was easy to criticise other wives and other parents, especially when not a wife or not a parent yourself.

That is my own position. I am neither a wife nor a parent and always feel a little bit timorous about giving rigorous advice to folk who know more about these things, experimentally, than I do. It is one of the things that amazes me about the priesthood of the Roman Catholic Church—I mean, their courage in giving advice to wives, husbands and parents.

But, perhaps, remembering that I was once a child and still trying to keep that memory green, I may say something to you from that point of view. One of the things that I would say is that, forty years ago, I seem to remember that my mother used to ask whether it was not more difficult to bring up children than it had been twenty-five years before. It has always been difficult.

In the first century, with so much paganism and immorality around, it must have been terrible, and from that viewpoint, it is likely to be easier now than then. The appalling thing today, as I see it, is that all a child has to do is to sulk sufficiently to get anything. Parents seem to be making very large sacrifices of authority for the sake of a momentary peace. But I say that very humbly.

It seems almost impossible to take up the task of parenthood seriously for the first time after you have been the parent of your child for ten or more years. The necessary thing appears to a spectator to be, to begin the task of teaching your child what your yea and nay mean very early. If the psychologists are right, that can scarcely be too early; certainly before the end of the first year.

About strictness—this is what I think for what it is worth. In all matters of definite principle, you have to be as straight and unbending as a steel bar. But matters of principles are very few. In all other matters, matters of judgment and opinion, I fancy that once your children are assured of your love for them—and I am certain they are—it is a good thing to reason and discuss.

Persuasiveness, especially the persuasiveness of love, is a powerful appeal to a child. God gave us only ten commandments, not a hundred. About these, he refuses to argue. But about everything else, he says, Come now, and let us reason together.

But I believe in the victory of love. You will not lose the respect of your children by your firmness if the lovelight is always shining in your eyes. And remember what the Chinese say: God could not be everywhere, so he made mothers. God bless you and all mothers everywhere.

Many Portraits of Christ

QUESTION: Are there not two portraits of Jesus in the Gospels; one of them, the portrait in the first three Gospels of a man who spent his life, going about doing good; and the other portrait, that of John's Gospel, of a supernatural Christ? Which is the true one?

ANSWER: Yes, there are. As a matter of fact, there are three portraits of Christ in the New Testament; the two you have mentioned and that which Paul presents of the Crucified and Risen Lord.

Which is the true one? Well, I have had several portraits taken. In my opinion, none of them does me justice, though others think that some of them flatter me. Which is the true one? Two were snapped by my wife last week. One shows me at my typewriter. Another shows me attired in a bathing suit. Which is the true one?

The answer is, of course, that they are all true, but that none of them is inclusive of the whole man. So it is with every portrait of Jesus. He was a man who went about doing

good. John, brooding over the fact of the good he had done and was still doing, even after his ascension, found that the only explanation of such consistent and superlative goodness was to be found in the emphasis of his divinity.

Paul, who had spent the first thirty years of his life in achieving moral excellence by the help of Pharisaism and its machinery of morality, saw that the death of Christ and his triumph over death was the vital thing for him and his emancipation from the terrible tyranny of fear and law.

No portrait of Jesus is a complete one. We need them all to get the complete Christ. Personally, I think we need more. We shall never see the complete Jesus until we have a portrait painted by white men, black men, yellow men; by Magdalenes, Marys, philosophers and redeemed crooks, and one final portrait painted by a little child. Then, when the whole world has seen him, visioned him, mirrored him, we shall begin to understand what the fulness of Christ really means.

That Dreadful Younger Generation

QUESTION: How can you say that the world is getting better in view of what we know about the younger generation?

ANSWER: The lady does not state her age in her letter but I gather she does not, herself, belong to the younger generation. Nor do I. I was going to say that I wished I did. But I'm not so sure. When I look back on my own youth I have a feeling of amazement which I think is shared by all honest men and women with any honest memory left; a feeling of amazement that I came through that time of teething-rash as well as I did. It wasn't my fault or to my credit. Whatever thanks are due anybody are due my mother and my God.

And I am free to say that the battles I had to fight and the snares I somehow escaped were not a tithe as numerous as those which modern youth has to meet and escape. We picked up a lot of smutty knowledge but we were too sacred of nature to put it into practice. Nobody amongst the well-instructed youth of this generation is scared of nature, yet they keep remarkably clean.

If the youth of this generation goes to the dogs, it will be for lack of good, self-sacrificing mothers, but I fancy that there are nearly as many of them as ever—though, perhaps, not quite so many. Meantime, let's adopt the motto, regarding the youth of this generation: "Fling away your hammer and get a horn." Why not boost and cheer a little? They are fighting a great battle, and knocking and nagging does more harm than good. Let's give them a cheer—even *your* daughter, madam, or *your* son, sir. They're making the grade in much greater numbers than you suppose. There are more of them away from home than there used to be. There are bigger problems and temptations confronting them.

I'm tired of the denunciation of this old world. Just as this answer was being prepared, my wife read this remark from an English comic paper. It may surprise you to know they have them in England but they do. This is what she read: "Dean Inge's scathing denunciation at the Goldsmith's Hall, of modern life, proves that there are grounds for the widespread suspicion that the Dean is not perfectly satisfied with everything." And that is about all that is proven by denunciation, anyway, whether it be the denunciation of a Dean or any of the rest of us. Let's throw that hammer away!

Absolution

QUESTION: What does the 23rd verse of the twentieth chapter of Saint John mean when it makes Jesus

say: whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted, and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained?

ANSWER: That is going to require a long answer. I try to avoid controversy and, as students know, that is one of the great controversial verses of the New Testament, being one of the passages on which the priest bases his sole right to give absolution after confession. There seems to be no doubt at all that the church has the right given it by Jesus Christ, to grant absolution. The verse can mean nothing less. The only question is whether that right of the church is centered in and confined to the priest. That again, depends on some questions of fact.

It depends, for instance, upon who were present when Jesus said this. If only the Apostles were present, then we might argue that only those who are the spiritual descendants of the Apostles had this right by ordination. On such a matter, I prefer to reinforce my own opinion with that of the admittedly greatest authority on John's Gospel—of the past century, at any rate—Bishop Westcott, of Durham. Verse 19 says the “disciples were assembled” but “disciples” is often a broader term—a more inclusive term than “apostles.” In his account of the same incident, Luke in chapter 24 and verse 33 says that there were present “the disciples and they that were with them.”

In the first chapter of Acts, those who were with them numbered 170, men, women and probably children. So, it was the whole company of believing people, not the Apostles only, who heard Jesus say this to them. It was an authority given to the whole church as a group of believers. That carries the implication that all their spiritual heirs, of all the churches today, have that right, not just one branch of the believing group or one section of its officials. So Westcott says, “The main thought which the words convey is that of the reality

of the power of absolution from sin granted to the whole church, and not of the particular organization through which the power is administered."

There is nothing in the context, as has been seen, to show that the power was confined to any particular group (as the Apostles) among the whole company present. The commission must therefore be regarded properly as the commission of the Christian society and not as that of the Christian ministry. "Then," Westcott goes on to say, "the promise, as being made not to one but to the society, carries with it of necessity, though this is not distinctly expressed, the character perpetuity; the society never dies." Westcott goes on again to say, "It is impossible to contemplate an absolute individual exercise of the power of retaining. . . . At the same time the exercise of the power must be placed in the closest possible connection with the faculty of spiritual discernment consequent upon the gift of the Holy Spirit."

The whole church has the gift of absolution; the gift of remitting or retaining sins. The whole church is, of course, the whole body of believers in Jesus Christ on the earth, at any one time in every land and in every language. It is not any one branch of the church and it is not any one branch of the ministry. Now, I think it is true that the whole world-wide group of Christian people, Catholic, Protestant, Greek Orthodox, Ethiopian, Russian, Indian, Negro Christians—the whole world-wide commonwealth of Christ—does determine, in a very real way what is and what is not sinful. And I think that, generally speaking, the Spirit of God—that Spirit which Jesus promised should lead us into all the truth, gradually, is leading the whole body of believers all the time, to see what sin is.

. There are front ranks of the Christian army, which enter into the citadel of truth before the rear ranks. But, ultimately, the whole army comes to accept something as sinful. An

instance of that is slavery. For eighteen centuries, the church and slavery were able to occupy the same bed, more or less comfortably. Then, the Spirit began to lead the whole Church, in England and America and France, pretty much at the same time, and mostly during the lifetime of George Washington, into the truth about slavery.

It has taken a century for the rear ranks of the army to catch up, and I am not sure that everybody has, even now,—Portugal is not yet sure about giving up slavery. But there it is. The same thing is true about alcohol. I am not too old to remember when it was thought a good thing by church wardens and even by Methodist officials to provide the minister a glass of wine before going into the pulpit so that the sermon might be lively; and another when he came down from the pulpit, to refresh him.

Well, that has passed, and there is a growing world-consciousness against alcohol. It is the Spirit leading us into all the truth. What was not generally accepted as sinful in one century will be accepted as sinful in another. Speaking about alcohol, I think we should emphasize that the Spirit *leads*; he does not drive. I think we are apt to drive reforms too much in advance of his general leading. There is danger of terrible reactions in that. I believe we are seeing some of them in the case of Prohibition.

Turning from that, I think we see the same thing in the matter of the treatment of prisoners of war. We talk a lot of bitter and foolish things about German treatment of prisoners during the late war, but I believe that every warring nation treated its prisoners better during that war than any nation, including this nation, treated its prisoners during any previous war. It is the Spirit leading the general Christian consciousness, throughout the world to new conceptions of what is sinful, inhuman, and therefore not in conformity with the divine.

That, at least, is what is meant by the whole church remitting and retaining sin and it is perfectly marvelous to consider how we have been led to get new conceptions of what is to be regarded as sinful, as the centuries have passed. The claim made by the church today on the morals of the husband is higher than Paul, for instance, ever dreamed for he only insisted that a bishop should be the husband of one wife. Labor has come into a position of emancipation that no New Testament writer would have thought possible and the work is not yet finished. It is more true of Jesus Christ than it ever was of John Brown that "His soul is marching on."

Can a Catholic Be President?

QUESTION: Can a man who is a Roman Catholic become the President of these United States?

ANSWER: My questioner sends me a newspaper clipping from the Literary Digest quoting one of our most respected and beloved Methodist preachers, Lynn Harold Hough, as saying that he personally does not feel there is any great danger from the Catholic Church at this point. "Certainly Protestantism has made its own unhappy contribution to the forces of reaction," says Lynn Harold Hough, and goes on—"The truth is we must watch every one of the groups, religious and secular, in respect of keeping our liberties secure. None of us can be trusted with a leadership which is not subjected to the inspection of very critical minds."

Dr. Hough concludes his address by saying that, "if the Catholic candidate is able, otherwise, to qualify for the position, let us have no fear in electing him. Nothing will do more to create an era of good-will. And there is no wise principle that needs be sacrificed."

That opinion has created a great deal of controversy and I suppose that if I say I agree with Dr. Hough, I shall be mis-

understood, also. But I do agree with Lynn Harold Hough. I am not discussing personalities because I am not asked to do so and should not, if I were asked. What we have to determine under this question is, whether the Constitution of these United States allows a Catholic to be President. If the Constitution allows that, then it simply remains, as Dr. Hough says, whether the individual candidate is otherwise qualified. I think we can trust the electors.

The Constitution says that the President must take the following oath, "I do solemnly swear that I will faithfully execute the office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my ability, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States." According to the Constitution, that need not even be in the form of an oath but needs only to be an affirmation—which, again, means, I take it, that even an atheist could be President. If an atheist, then certainly a Catholic.

Of course, the electors must determine whether any individual candidate is competent to keep that oath when he makes it. But there is no question about the right of a Catholic to become a candidate for President.

What I think all my friends have to realize is that there are only two forms of government in the world today to choose from. One is a democracy; the other is a dictatorship. Under a democracy, you have to take the risk of getting the wrong man elected. But you must either take that risk or change your form of government. There is no other course.

Can Murderers Be Saved?

QUESTION: Taking young Hickman for an example, do you think the terrible crime he recently committed is any worse in the eyes of God than any other breaking of the Ten Commandments? If this

boy would simply give his heart to Christ cannot he stand as good a chance of gaining a home in Heaven as any saint who ever lived?

ANSWER: You expect an honest answer. I will give it. Young Hickman committed a very terrible and revolting crime against Society. For that, both as an act of justice which Society demands, and as a preventive measure, he will, as I expect, receive the just reward of his deeds. He will suffer from Society, the punishment that Society demands.

But that crime is also in another sphere. He has offended against the family spirit of the kingdom of God. He has done it in a certain way. Others have done it in other ways, quite as certain. There is no gradation of sin in the New Testament. Sin doesn't have to be physical to be sinful and it doesn't have to be an offence against Society to be sinful. Christ taught that the lustful eye committed adultery and the angry heart committed murder.

Concerning the second part of your question, most of my answers are only given as the expression of my own opinion, but in this case, I can give, with Christ's own absolute authority, the statement, that whosoever cometh unto him will in no wise be cast out. That is all-embracing. It includes Hickman and it also includes you and me.

The Colored Man's Burden

QUESTION: *Why does the present generation of white people hate the present generation of Negroes? What can the present generation of Negroes do to remove this hate?*

ANSWER: The questioner recites the fact that, in the slavery days, the Negroes were faithful to their white masters

to the very end of that epoch; that they did not commit a single act of ruthlessness, even during the Civil War, though large sections of white folk still kept them in slavery during that time. He reminds me of other virtues of the Negro race which were emphasized during the World War but have since been ignored. I think we white men ought to be reminded of these things.

But I do not think that the word "hate" is quite the word to use. I am not a native-born American and so look at these things somewhat as a spectator. I also confess to being a very bewildered spectator and, in many respects, an ignorant one. Neither, remembering the treatment accorded to men of another color by some white men in India and the East, do I feel like accusing American Whites of singular treatment. The English are just as contemptuous as the Americans, in their own spheres of influence. So, I speak with a certain amount of diffidence.

But I do not think that "hate" is the right word. It is rather contempt than hate; a certain attitude of superiority which is quite unjustified by the facts. For, of course, the facts are that until 1864, and later, the colored people of America were almost totally uneducated. Whatever progress they have made educationally has been made since that time. The story of that progress has been a romance. In sixty years, the colored races have come to share, in many spheres, the throne with the white man; notably in art, music and drama.

I think that contempt was somewhat excusable twenty years ago. There was a tendency then for the colored man to make himself an imitation white man. Imitation may be the sincerest form of flattery but it always creates contempt in the mind of the one who is flattered. The best thing that has happened lately is the discovery by the colored races of America of their own self-consciousness and the fact that they have their own separate and distinct means of self-expression. That

will mean the ultimate removal of their decreasing "inferiority complex," of which, if I may say so, their complaints of "hate" on the part of the white man are a sign. The development by the colored man of his own characteristics and the dedication of these to the common good are also going to remove the contempt of the Whites.

Mutual segregation seems an absolute necessity. That segregation is not mutual. The colored folk are forbidden to mix with the Whites but the Whites are too disposed to mix with the colored in illicit and terrible ways. I sat on the bench with the Judge for a whole morning while he was trying cases in the Morals Court. Every female defendant was a colored woman. It occurred to me then, and seems clear to me now, that that is a matter which the colored races ought to take up vigorously, exerting every possible effort to the prevention of the use of their women by white men for illicit purposes.

Only the colored races can deal with that problem adequately. They ought to exert pressure of the extremest sort to prevent members of their own race from bringing their own race into that contempt which prostitution always brings. In the South, the colored man is much more helpless in that particular.

I am glad to know that colored folk do not hate white folk. They must save themselves from that for their own sakes. Nothing is so self-destructive as hate. It is always a painful experience to carry a Cross. The colored races are still carrying theirs. They will do much if they can still carry their Cross heroically. In a wonderful book that has nothing to do with the race question but which has a great deal to do with Jesus Christ, the writer recently said about Christ, "Christ drank to the dregs the cup of disappointment and despair. Isaiah's words: 'A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief,' appropriately describe him; but he did not pathetically call attention to the fact."

Then, what I think is a great sentence and a great moral statement: "He wore but did not advertise a crown of thorns." (Streeter, "Reality," page 195.) When the colored races can imitate their Lord and carry their crown of thorns heroically, bravely, sweetly, I believe that the day of their complete emancipation will be at hand.

Religion and Moral Concepts

QUESTION: Do our religious conceptions really matter as a basis for conduct? Cannot a man do right without having right thoughts about God?

ANSWER: A man may but a nation cannot. The man may because he will (whether he appreciates the fact or not) be affected in his standards of morality by the national moral standards surrounding him. His is a kind of borrowed morality. But if a nation loses its rightness of thought about God, the atmosphere which that nation breathes—I mean the moral atmosphere—will grow foul and the nation will die.

Rome worshipped a very masculine God named Jupiter and the whole life of that nation became a worship of mere brute strength and cruel force which destroyed it at last because the things that womanhood and childhood stand for, purity, tenderness, trust, died from out the life of the nation.

Greece worshipped Venus, the merely beautiful in form. *Greece* died of syphilis. *Germany*, in the twenty years before the Great War worshipped a monster of blood and iron. The ruthless subjugation of the individual to the State destroyed the old *Germany*, though a newer and finer *Germany* is emerging—something like the old, fine nation that existed before 1866.

So it goes. Our real issue with the Rationalists is whether man is a being with freedom of will. If he is not, then

it is silly to punish the Ruth Snyders or the Hickmans at all—even with one day of imprisonment. It is silly to hunt gunmen. If there is no freedom of will, there is no choice left to man. That means that the real crook is the policeman who tries to hold a man responsible for his crimes, in spite of the defence attorneys. There would be no civilization or progress if there were no insistence on freedom. So, it is obvious that religious concepts matter to conduct. Nothing else does matter if they do not.

Where Are the Dead?

QUESTION: According to your understanding of the Bible, where are the dead, that is, those who have died in Christ: are they in Heaven with the angelic hosts or are they asleep until the time of Christ's second coming?

ANSWER: In all matters relating to the spirit world, human language is struggling to express something beyond its limited powers. That is true of Bible language also. Moreover, the Oriental mind, especially, delights to think in terms of pictures and the Hebrew minds of the writers of the New Testament were Oriental so that there is much imagery, of necessity, in the New Testament. Yet again, they, like ourselves, inherited a great number of preconceptions from their forefathers which they had not entirely shed when they wrote.

So, we should always beware of reading descriptions both of the destiny of the blessed and descriptions of the destiny of the condemned, with the literalness of Western minds. All such expressions as a thousand years and descriptions of material harps and feasts are to be taken allegorically, of course. It is simply wooden to do otherwise.

By the same rule—coming to a definite answer to your question—I think we must dismiss the time element from all thought about the spirit world. The modern psychologists say that even the mortal mind we have here does not know time except in an acquired way. When we talk about today and tomorrow and when we talk about what is past or present, we are simply talking about something that applies only to our own sphere.

Those who were in Christ are in Christ. They are not asleep. They live, gloriously and actively in his unveiled presence. They did that here in his veiled presence. Nothing happened to them in death except that the veil concealing him was taken away. The result for them is not sleep but more ecstatic life, more abundant and manifest life.

Unbelief and Disbelief

QUESTION: Do you see any difference between Un-Belief in the Scriptures and Dis-Belief?

ANSWER: All the difference in the world. Disbelief is simply not believing. There is no sin in it. Christ never complained and does not now complain because some man or woman does not believe in our dogmas about him. What he asks is, that we believe in him; not that we believe in the dogmas about him.

Unbelief is the refusal to believe in Jesus Christ; in his goodness, his Lordship, his purity. A man can love his wife without believing the wonderful stories about her family having come over in the Mayflower or the Ark. That may be disbelief and need have nothing to do with his love for her. But if he doesn't believe in his wife herself—that is unbelief.

Are Prayers Answered?

QUESTION: My experience is that prayers are not answered. In what way can we assure ourselves that sincere, worth while prayers will be answered?

ANSWER: Well, you have to pray right. You know the story about the little boy who prayed for the bicycle. His parents heard him praying. They thought he was too young for a bicycle and decided to buy him a tricycle. When it arrived, they told him to go into the barn and see what God had sent him. He was gone longer than they had expected and so they crept in after him. He was on his knees, saying to God, "Dear God, I'm much obliged but I DID think YOU would know the difference between a bicycle and a tricycle."

God does; but we make a mistake when we think of prayer as a definite request for definite things. It may be that, but always with the reservation, however, that God's will be done; not ours. But requesting is not the highest type of prayer. There is very little requesting in the Lord's Prayer. Why not take a pencil and paper and write down, under each other, the various petitions in two columns; those that ask for the glorification of God and those which relate only to our own affairs?

Bread to carry life along, forgiveness for the past, the shielding love of God in our combats with evil in the future—that is all that belongs to the list of things we ask for ourselves in the model prayer. The rest is for the glorification of God. And when we get those proportions into our living and into our prayers we shall find our prayers answered.

When we live for the glory of God, and work for the glory of God, and pray for the glory of God, we shall find prayer being answered in an ever increasing way.

What Is Perfection?

QUESTION: What did Jesus mean, in the Sermon on the Mount, when he said, "Ye, therefore, shall be perfect, as your Father in Heaven is perfect?" There does not seem to be any standard of comparison by which the Father and ourselves can be compared.

ANSWER: Well, a father and a son can always be compared because they are of the same family, of the same nature and of the same general disposition. And it is important to notice that it is the word Father that Jesus uses, so that here, as everywhere else, he assumes that family relationship and that family resemblance. That is the first fact.

The second is this, that the word, "perfect" which Jesus used is the Greek word "teleos." That means, really, the adaptation to ends. What Jesus said was, just as your Father does so perfectly fulfil the end for which he exists—if I may use that expression without misunderstanding—so may you; so should you, fulfil the end for which you exist. Your task is smaller than his but you can do it just as perfectly; even as the oiler can do his work as perfectly as the captain of the ship.

What Jesus really said, to put it still another way, was, *live* up to the limit of *your* possibilities. You cannot live up to the limit of his possibilities and nobody expects you to do so. Live up to the limit of your own.

The dewdrop is not the ocean but it can reflect all the amazing colors of the ocean. A skylark is not an organ but it can sing in high heaven, for all that. A lily is not a glorious pine tree but it can bloom up to the limits of its possibilities of blooming.

And that, as I understand it, is what Jesus meant. But there is this wonderful thing about anything that Jesus said, that it has meanings and possibilities of reflection beyond anything I can think. If you meditate upon the words of Christ, you can find added and richer meanings. I hope you will be able to do this.

Were the Brothers of Jesus Unfriendly?

QUESTION: Kindly explain Matthew, chapter XIII and verse 55; also Mark, chapter VI and verse 3. Any Roman Catholic that I have spoken to on the subject says that our Lord's Mother was always a virgin. Now, if she had four other sons, as the above verses lead me to believe, why did our Lord when on the cross give her over to the care of John who was not one of her sons?

ANSWER: Matthew, chapter XIII, verse 55 says, "Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? And his brethren, James and Joseph and Simon and Jude? And his sisters, are they not all with us?" Mark, chapter VI, verse 3 reads in exactly the same way.

Well, there it is. Does it mean what it says? If it does not, what is the use of reading anything at all. Nothing is plainer or more positive. Catholic and Protestant both derive their information from the Gospels. The only information fairly to be derived from that and every other reference to Mary that has a bearing on her motherhood implies that she had several children.

But about his giving her into the care of John at the Cross; if you read Mark III and verses 31 to 35, you will see that there is a lack of sympathy between Jesus and his

brothers—not the first nor the last time in history that has happened. At first, Mary herself seems to have been affected by it as that passage showed. But later, she is found amongst the women who constantly were with him, completely identifying herself with his cause. Neither is that unusual. His brothers were not at his cross. She was and John was. What more natural than that he should give somebody who was actually there the care of his mother in preference to those who were not there?

After the Resurrection, he showed himself to his brothers, according to Paul. The result of that was that they came in and you find them in the first chapter of Acts, amongst the group waiting for Pentecost. That all seems very human and very feasible to me.

Why does the Roman Catholic Church insist on the perpetual virginity of Mary? The answer is that all round the coasts of the Mediterranean, from the beginnings of history, there has been a pagan worship of a virgin mother—though not always virgin.

The Roman Catholic Church has always pursued the policy of appropriating the pagan and associating it with Christianity to make the transition from paganism more easy for pagans and to more easily secure the Christian baptism of pagan tribes and peoples. It did that with the old pagan festivals of Yule-tide, and with the pagan Spring-time festival of Greece of which the Easter egg is a direct descendant. Candlemas, Michaelmas and other feasts are mostly appropriated pagan festivals from which they were descended and incorporated into Christianity in order to follow the line of least resistance—that is why the old Scotch folk, who were so opposed to Rome, refused to observe the Easter and Christmas festivals, because they knew they had descended through Rome from paganism.

In exactly the same way, Roman Catholicism, a Mediterranean religion, appropriated the old pagan worship of the

virgin mother and that is what Madonna worship means today. Ask any unbiased historian if this is not so, or if you want authoritative information, read Sir James Fraser's "Golden Bough."

Free Will and Omniscience

QUESTION: How do you explain the theory of an omnipotent God and man's free will? The best explanation I have heard so far is that we cannot hope to understand such a confusing question in this life.

ANSWER: It is evident that my brother is not satisfied with the explanation that we cannot hope to understand what he calls this confusing question in this life. I do not think we *ought* to be satisfied with such an answer. I suppose that once folk thought it was of no use to try to fly because God never intended man to do so.

However impossible the answer to a question seems to be, I think we ought to seek an answer. The minds of men, as well as their souls, are growing all the while and they grow by struggling with questions that seem, at first, too big for them. This week, I saw a baby trying to lift a ten-pound weight. She was of the female persuasion so kept on trying in spite of her weakness. She did not succeed but if she keeps at it, she will develop muscles that will enable her to do it some day. It is like that with our mental and spiritual struggles.

Now, I think that the explanation of that difficulty about God's omnipotence and man's free will is this: When God created man he deliberately sacrificed his omnipotence in order to have a free being in the universe who, because of his freedom, could become, in some measure, a companion with himself. God is not omnipotent in man's affairs, in my

judgment. And he is not omnipotent because he, himself, deliberately limited his own omnipotence in order to give his love to somebody to woo, if I may use that expression.

Neither God nor man could woo a machine, which is what a man without free will would have been. God took all the risks involved in limiting his own omnipotence and the responsibility he assumed by that act was the responsibility of letting man do harm in his universe. It looked at first as if man were going to do nothing but harm, but God came to the rescue again in Jesus Christ and by Christ's coming said, "How shall I give thee up, O House of Israel?" He has never done that and the ultimate result will be the complete justification of God's self-limitation of his omnipotence and omniscience.

How Should We Fear God?

QUESTION: Why should we fear God?

ANSWER: That question is abbreviated from a very interesting and kindly letter which I much appreciate. There is only one reason why we should fear God. It is found in Psalm 130, and the fourth verse, "There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared." It is exactly the same reason that I had for fearing my mother more than my father in the far-back days when they were both with me visibly. If I did anything wrong he, being an old-fashioned father, would tan my hide. She, being an old-fashioned mother, would grieve lest my peccadillos might indicate that I was going to make a wreck of my life.

My body shrank from the humiliation and the loss of dignity that his stick might cause me, along with the physical pain. But my soul just shrank from giving my mother cause to weep about me and pray to God for me.

I hated rousing his anger. But I dreaded arousing her grief much more. I was afraid of the outraged love of my mother which seldom expressed itself in anger but in prayer—in real, not sentimental grief. That is the kind of fear, the only kind of fear we need have for God. The heart of the Eternal is most wonderfully kind and it is a grievous thing to try to break that heart again.

Has a Still-Born Baby a Soul?

QUESTION: Has a still-born baby a soul?

ANSWER: I am assuming that that question comes from somebody really anxious for some deep personal reason for a reply. A lady asks the question and there may be a world of regret and anxiety behind the enquiry.

The lawyers hold, I believe, that a child has a separate existence from the fourth month of its pre-natal existence. A separate existence pre-supposes a separate soul. Personally, I do not know and I have never had a personal reason for asking myself the question. In any case, I put that question where I put so many others, in the hands of Christ, knowing it is safe there for an answer that must be richer and more final than any I could give.

In the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth centuries, those scholars who are called the Schoolmen used to spend weary months and even years debating questions like that, not always with Christian sweetness. I hope we are wiser nowadays. It ought to be enough that Jesus said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me," if the soul is there, as I believe it is.

About all questions of the after life we know very little. We know nearly as little about the soul itself. It is a new territory which the human mind is only just beginning to

explore. But concerning all those questions, I'm glad I learned Tennyson's great poem in my youth before my memory became too crowded with other things and that I especially learned to say about my departed dear ones, with Tennyson (slightly changed): "I trust he lives with Thee and there I find him worthier to be loved."

God's Method of Forgiveness

QUESTION: Would you say it is a divine law that unless we forgive, we cannot expect God's forgiveness? Did Paul state God's method of forgiveness when he said in Ephesians, chapter IV and verses 26 and 28, we were to be angry but sin not? Does the first chapter of Isaiah and the eighteenth verse, where God says, "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow" indicate that all sin is forgiven by return to God?

ANSWER: Those are just a few of the questions that my friend asks me. I shall have to try to answer them together. The teaching of Christ undoubtedly is that we cannot expect forgiveness unless we are forgiving. Why should we? I was going to say that we hardly needed Christ to tell us that we cannot expect that treatment from anybody that we are not, ourselves, willing to accord.

The teaching of Jesus is not confined to that passage. He taught the same thing in many places; for instance, where he told the story of the man who owed 500 pence and expected forgiveness but refused to forgive the man who only owed him 50 pence. It is too much to expect of human nature that it shall be entirely consistent, but that consistency is demanded when it comes to our expecting God to forgive us

for sins that are more hideous as treacheries than any treachery of which our neighbor can be guilty against us.

As to what Isaiah contains of the truth of forgiveness, the reference there is to national sin. Isaiah is speaking to the whole Jewish nation. But the principle applies. When God forgives, he forgives absolutely without any reservation whatever. It is the only way to forgive.

God comes to forgive us because of his own infinite love for us and for no other reason. But because there are great universal laws involved, he himself chose Christ as his representative to us and as our representative to him, making him the mediator, the plenipotentiary, (like nations have with each other) to create that atmosphere where forgiveness would be possible and the righteousness as well as the love of God vindicated.

Is H. L. Mencken Good For Us?

QUESTION: What do you think is the influence of H. L. Mencken in the life of America? Is it good or bad?

ANSWER: Almost altogether good, if you take it right. It's as good as turkey rhubarb, or bitter aloes or nasty medicine of that kind; it's good like a gale amongst rotten branches. It reveals to us the rotten places, shakes our vulgar complacencies, and that is always good.

But it's bad for Mencken. To be always critical and destructive and a seeker after the wrong and ugly is always bad for anybody, even for a reformer—and Mencken is not that. It gets us into a condition of distorted vision and narrowed faith in humanity. Moreover, it's the kind of thing that anybody can do if he has enough vitriol in his disposition and enough gall in his ink.

But it is good for us. There are times when I almost want to read him on my knees and cry, with Richard Baxter as he saw the poor wretch being haled off to execution, "There, but for the grace of God, goes Richard Baxter."

Christ and the Psalms

QUESTION: I find a resemblance between the words of Christ on the Cross and the 22nd Psalm. Am I justified in thinking there is any resemblance?

ANSWER: You have every justification in the world. At the Temptation, Jesus used nothing but Scripture in replying to the Devil and you will find it interesting to check up on the marginal references to corroborate that. The story is in Matthew's Gospel and the 4th chapter.

That makes it look as if it was the habit of Christ to constantly refresh his mind by the repetition of Scripture, especially the Psalms. He certainly did so on the Cross and there is not the least doubt that the words, "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me," being, as they are, the first words of the 22nd Psalm, were also the beginning of his repetition of that Psalm to himself as he hung there. If you read the whole Psalm, you will see how perfectly that Psalm fits his dying condition. It is almost a description of what took place at the Cross, though written at least 700 years before.

Does Broadcasting Hurt Religion?

QUESTION: Does not the broadcasting of Sunday morning services tend to have a serious and harmful effect on the congregations where broadcasting is not practised and thus become harmful to religion?

ANSWER: No—the sooner the Protestant churches realize what a small minority of the people are attending the House of God, the better. The facts are appalling—like a lot more of the facts that we blind ourselves to. I have again and again said that in the ward where this church is situated, there are more than 70,000 persons residing. There are three thousand more persons living in the ward this year than last. Next year, there will be three thousand more. There are not more than 8400 pew sittings in all the churches of the ward, including Catholic, Protestant, Lutheran, Greek Orthodox. That means that there is only accommodation for slightly more than ten percent of the population.

But this ward is more highly favored than most because it contains two of the largest churches in the city. In other wards, the average of sittings is likely to be even smaller, therefore. Yet I am going to say that not half the sittings provided are used by the people. Why walk blindfold? The facts are unpleasant but that is not a reason for burying our heads in the sand. Are the churches afraid of a religious census? Fools may laugh at the terrible results that a census will reveal, but wise men, when they connect the facts disclosed with the other facts about divorce, gun-toting, crime growth and dope peddling, together with the general loosening up of sexual morality, will both weep and bestir themselves.

The fact is that we are in a position exactly similar to that prevailing in England throughout the first half of the eighteenth century. Most of the people were outside the churches—and the churches did not care. Wesley and his helpers decided to go out to the people, since they would not come in to him. The churches cursed him but the churches were saved and civilization was saved also.

The radio is God's gift to religion for its reclamation in this century. It is our duty to use it. The people need it as

a means of conveying religious—as distinct from sectarian—truth. They do not merely need it but are showing that they want it by listening in, in greater numbers every week. It is the people, not the churches, who need our first consideration.

The radio gives them a new chance to be brought into touch with prayer, Christian song and Christian teaching. There is undoubted evidence that they are availing themselves of the opportunity. That is the only justification needed.

Broadcasting Religion a Sign of Revival

QUESTION: Do you believe that the preaching of the Gospel by radio is a favorable or an unfavorable sign of the times?

ANSWER: Altogether favorable. There are ten times more folk listening to this question box than this church would accommodate. More than half of them are not interested in churches at all and hate ecclesiastical religion. But every single one of them is interested in Jesus Christ, who is still fulfilling his prophecy, “I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me.”

Until the radio came, these folk who did not like churches were cut off from Christ in large measure. Today, they have their interest kindled.

Even if the people wanted to go to church, there are not enough churches for them in the big cities, though there are too many in the small ones. In this ward of the city, there are 70,000 persons and church sittings—Catholic, Protestant, Greek Orthodox and the other 57 varieties—yet the sittings

in church pews do not exceed 8400. What about the rest if the Gospel is of universal application and belongs to everybody?

Religion is only vital when it goes out into the street. A Christianity that merely belongs to churches, academies, withdrawn places, and which just makes itself intelligible to those who were trained to understand its vocabularies, is dead. Every now and again, it has a resurrection which we call a revival. Then, it gets out amongst the people once more.

The folk who believe it belongs to churches and elect persons, only, always object to it doing so. They objected to Francis of Assissi preaching in the highways and byways. They objected to Luther bringing the story of Jesus into the streets. They objected to Wesley daring to talk about a withdrawn thing like religion from his father's tombstone and in densely packed crowds. They stoned General Booth because he dared to preach from street corners.

The same breed condemns the radio because it does the same thing, bringing the Gospel out of the shadows into the sunlight and dust of common life and applying it there. They are not all to be found, these hidebound folk, in any one faith or any one church. They are the traditionalists of all the churches.

There is another big thing that radio is doing which is in the historic line of all real revival of religion. When the Maccabean revival of Judaism took place 150 years before Christ, men demanded that the sacred book of their faith should be translated out of the sacred language of Hebrew into the common Greek they spoke. Thus came the Septuagint. Francis broke with the same tradition and expressed his sense of the same urge when he wrote his songs and sermons in native Italian and his mother's native French instead of pious Latin. Luther, Wycliffe, Tyndale, all felt the demand to translate the Word of God out of time-worn formulae into

the common tongue. So did Wesley in a different way when he started the Methodist Book Concern.

Radio is necessitating the same thing. We are having to speak to men and women who simply do not know the meaning of definitely religious words and phrases. The Gospel is becoming more homelike, more convertible into the thought-forms of ordinary men without a definitely religious vocabulary. That is going to save religion and save the world. We are marching along the tracks of these air-waves, right along the true historic road, and are definitely in line with the age-long purposes of God.

America's Five Greatest Preachers

QUESTION: Who were the five greatest preachers that the United States have produced?

ANSWER: That is entirely a matter of opinion and my opinion is worth no more, in a matter of opinion, than anybody else's, but I should say: *Jonathan Edwards*—a very narrow person but a truly great preacher; *Cotton Mather*—a very vain person who wrote 382 books which is 370 too many for most men to write. He became too interested in witchcraft and was the cause of many folk unnecessarily dying, but he was an amazing preacher; *Phillips Brooks*—the greatest preacher of them all; *Henry Ward Beecher*—who spoiled his amazing gifts as a preacher by his lecturing tours.

I should put *Dwight L. Moody* last, but certainly amongst the five. His simplicity concealed a great art and a great genius. His influence was greater than that of any two of the other four, in my opinion. But he is being very falsely represented today, by his alleged followers, who are nothing like so big in their conceptions of the kingdom of God as he was.

Fundamentalists and Modernists

QUESTION: What are the real points of difference between the Fundamentalists and the Modernists?

ANSWER: If I were as brave as I sometimes think myself I should say that the chief difference between Modernists and Fundamentalists is that the Modernists are drunk with the new wine of the marvelous scientific discoveries of the past fifty years while the Fundamentalists are still clinging to the grave-clothes of old traditions and stick-in-the-mud theologies. They are both very unfortunate in their leaders, who seem to have spent very little time at the feet of Jesus learning his meek and gentle spirit.

The average Modernist is far too disposed to sacrifice fundamental theological necessities like the absolute divinity of Jesus Christ, our Lord. The Fundamentalist is sometimes too disposed to damn everybody who does not believe that the first chapter of Genesis is literal history or the last chapter of Revelation a scale plan of Heaven. In such extreme cases, both are bigots and, as such, are a danger to the kingdom of God.

Christianity Not a Set of Prohibitions

QUESTION: Can you discuss for us the Truth in "Dowieism" as preached and practised at Zion, Illinois? It prohibits the use of pork products, oysters, doctors, drugs, on a basis of Christian ethics; also vaccination. How could they ignore a state or county order on small-pox, scarlet fever, etc?

ANSWER: I'm sure I don't know if, or how, Zion, Illinois, ignores state orders. I am not free to discuss Dowieism. I can

only state my own belief—that Christianity is not a series of prohibitions against this or that. It is the kind of life that demands that we love the Lord our God with all our heart, mind, strength and soul—and our neighbor as ourselves.

It is positive—not negative—and the greatest hinderers to its progress are those who think that every time they display a notice to keep off the grass they are doing the will of God. Moreover, any teaching that ignores the gift of God in the form of progressive medical and sanitary science is simply denying the most significant revelation that God is making of himself in our modern civilization outside of the Scriptures.

When will we learn, I wonder, to stop picking holes in the habits of our neighbor as to pork or tobacco or doctors and get down to the business of living unto our own Master—a task big enough for any and all of us?

As for doctors, Paul had his private physician, Luke, and Christ himself, in the story of the Good Samaritan and in his own practice, sanctioned and used at least primitive and simple medical means for the recovery of sick folk. That does not preclude the certainty of what we call faith-healing so long as it goes hand in hand with common-sense medical practice, and care.

As for pork, Peter was taught, pretty plainly that that kind of prohibition did not belong to the Christian regime. Christ taught plainly that it was not what went into our mouths but what came out of them that defiled them and us.

The Elephant and Five Blind Men

QUESTION: Your expressions on Modernism and Fundamentalism given over the radio this afternoon struck me as coming from one who was bursting with ego; whose mind, when expressed, was final. Am I right?

ANSWER: Let me tell my friend a little story about five blind men who went to interview an elephant. One of them felt of his trunk and said, The elephant is a kind of serpent. Another felt of his tail and said, No, the elephant is a kind of rope. Another felt of his leg and said, You are both wrong, the elephant is a kind of tree. Yet a fourth felt of his ear and said, Everybody is wrong. The elephant is like a flapping tent. The fifth said, Why cannot you fellows see the truth, I have leaned against his side and the elephant is a kind of house.

Unfortunately, that is not the end of the story for they got to quarreling and the real end of the story is that at the end of the quarrel, there were five blind men dead and one live elephant.

Once again I quote my little text: The fruits of the Spirit are love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance."

The Wise Men and the Star

QUESTION: Will you tell me the names of the three Wise Men who discovered the Star?

ANSWER: There isn't the faintest proof that there were only three wise men. There may have been thirty or three hundred. What Matthew says is that "when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of Herod the King, behold, wise men came from the East to worship him." The number is not stated but because it is stated that they gave three gifts—gold, frankincense, and myrrh, it has been assumed that there were three of them. Even their names are traditional and fanciful. The names are Belshazzar, Melchior and Caspar. They were supposed to be buried at Constantinople; their bodies afterwards being removed to Cologne, in Germany, where they are said to be to this day.

The big thing about them is that they were probably (almost certainly) Eastern astrologers serving in the courts of Eastern kings; that they had a certain amount of wisdom and brought this lesser wisdom and laid it as their tribute, at the feet of Jesus, the Greatest of the Wise throughout the ages.

Sunday Movies

QUESTION: Have you seen that a majority of the citizens of my town have voted for Sunday movies? If so, do you think this is right? Can you give a "Yes" or "No" answer?

ANSWER: That depends on what you mean by "this." It is one of those questions to which there can be no answer until the question itself has been better defined. There are many questions to which it is impossible to answer, "Yes" or "No." One of them is the question, Have you left off beating your wife? If you answer, "Yes," then you admit that you once did so. If you answer, "No" then, the question is, "Why haven't you?"

Now, I think it wrong for the citizens of your town or of any place to vote for Sunday movies. They are entirely unnecessary in any community nowadays when movie theatres are open every day at least twelve hours. The secularization of Sunday is one of the symptoms of the decreasing respect that modern civilization has for the Christian religion. That growing disrespect will ultimately involve the destruction of our Western civilization by another more Puritanical civilization. That will follow as surely as history is history—and as surely as God is God. It is written in the stars and it is written across every page of our long, human story. In that sense, the movement in favor of the relaxation of the healing simplicities of the Sabbath is wrong. Added to that, it is

always wrong for folk to add to the Sabbath employment of others for their own amusement.

But, if you mean is it right for a thing for which a majority of the people have voted to be brought into actuality, then the answer is "Yes." Sumptuary laws—as they are called—laws to prevent the people saying what they shall or shall not have, are always mischievous, and ultimately they always defeat their own ends.

Government of the people, for the people, by the people is the highest ideal of human government yet achieved and it is probably the highest ideal of government that ever will be achieved. We have got to take the risks of it, whatever they are. If the people vote wrong, it is the fault of their moral education which means that it is largely the fault of the preachers and the churches.

The way for preachers to remedy that state of things is not for preachers to be more political in their preaching but for them to be less so and more Biblical, more spiritual. It is the iron in the Bible getting into the blood of men that makes them strong to do right things and vote right things.

Sunday and Sabbath

QUESTION: I am a Christian believer though I belong to no particular denomination. Being a shut-in, I depend very much on your services and your interpretations. Here is a question that has much perplexed me: Is Sunday the Sabbath which God intends Christians to keep? If so, how can I prove it?

ANSWER: The Jewish Sabbath was the last day of the week. That was not our Saturday because the calendar has been changed several times since the ancient days of Moses.

The last time it was changed was just before George Washington was born. The reason it has been changed so often is because the sun refuses to do its work with the earth in exactly 365 days and needs a few more hours each year to do that work. There is thus an accumulation of hours through a series of years which have to be made up somehow. We make it up at present by adding every fourth year, to the number of days in the year. That has caused the various changes in the calendar and has caused us to lose the ancient Jewish Sabbath; which, for all we now know, may be Wednesday or Friday.

The first day of the week is not the same first day of the week it was when Jesus was in the flesh. But we keep it in memory of him. It happened to be the day of the week on which the early church celebrated his resurrection by meeting together and, as far as possible, abstaining from work.

It's a good hygienic practice to abstain from work one day in the week and there is a consensus of opinion that this should be the day. We owe something to Jesus. I think we owe everything to him. The early church thought so, too. So, out of love for our Lord we keep that day, without being compelled to. Compulsion is always wrong when it comes to the observing of any religious custom. Laws governing religious observance are always retroactive and deprecatory.

Keeping the Sabbath

QUESTION: What is your conception of the words in the Ten Commandments which read, "Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy?" How should we spend the Sabbath Day?

ANSWER: The answer to that question is partly along the line of definite fact and partly along the line of personal

opinion. You may take my facts as absolute. You must take my opinion for what it is worth.

Here are the facts: That the word Sabbath does not mean seventh, as so many suppose. It has nothing to do with the idea of "seventh" at all. I say that because persons are always writing me to ask whether we ought not to keep Saturday instead of Sunday as our Sabbath. The word Sabbath is older than the Hebrew nation or language and means cessation or rest.

The second statement that is a statement of fact and not of opinion is that in the Old Testament, the word "holy" means separate, chiefly. It does not mean pious but different, separate. So, what Moses said to the people was, Keep your day of cessation separate. Keep it distinct. Keep it different. It may be the seventh day or the first day. The characteristic thing about it, however, is that it must be a day of rest, of cessation. And it must be kept regularly and distinctly.

Now, quite early in the life of the Christian Church, the followers of Jesus began to keep the day of the week on which he rose from the dead as his day and their Sabbath: their day that was different. Pliny, the Roman Governor of Bithynia, wrote the Emperor Trajan a report of the life of his province and in it he describes the life of the Christians in the province. He says that they keep this day beginning it with a simple meal which they call the Agape, that is, the Love-feast and finish it with another meal, doubtless the Lord's Supper. So that, apart from the references in Scripture to the Lord's day, there is very good secular historical evidence of the age-long custom of the Christian Church.

Those are the matters of fact. Don't listen to folk who tell you that we must keep Saturday or be damned. Nothing is so insulting to our thought of God or to the facts of astronomy. Saturday this year is not the same day of the

week it was five hundred years ago and certainly not the same day of the week it was two thousand years ago.

It is the spirit of the thing, the willingness to recognize the command of God, which happens also to be the law of nature, that one day in seven is necessary for rest to a man or woman who wants to be normal and healthy.

Broadcasting and Community Worship

QUESTION: Why should a person attend church when he can listen to the services and hear them distinctly while sitting comfortably in his own chair in his own room?

ANSWER: That is a direct shot and I get it. But I'm not so sure that you are going to sit quite so comfortably in your chair after this, not if I can succeed in shooting at you as straight as you are shooting at me. All right. Here goes.

I think a man who will sit in his chair comfortably sucking in the Gospel like a sponge, is the most selfish being unhung, if he can get up and walk. The value of community worship is not just subjective. The whole congregation gains by the impulse of your presence, your prayer, your praise. If you don't believe that, think what it would feel like to be the only spectator at a theater or the only member of the audience at a concert.

What a wretched man you would be if yours were the only laugh and if yours were the only hands applauding. More than half the joy is in being part of a great company, all under the sway of the same emotion. It is like that with community worship. You make your contribution to the well-being of your worshiping brother, if you also are at-

tuned to his emotion, his yearning, his prayer. Shame on the man who denies the brother who is, perhaps, fighting a harder battle than himself, the sustenance and assistance of his presence.

God never blesses the soul of a man who is guilty of any form of selfishness. And staying at home to enjoy what God meant to be a great communal act is the most selfish act of all; disastrous to the spiritual life of the man who so gorges himself.

What Hospitals Owe to Christ

QUESTION: We are installing the radio and ear-phones for every patient in our Hospital and hope to have everything ready for your sermon and question box next Sunday. I have wondered whether you would like to speak a kind of dedicatory word over the air at your services Sunday so that we and our patients may hear you.

ANSWER: Now, I do that very gladly and feel very honored to be allowed to do that. I know quite a lot about hospitals. Once I was a chaplain to a hospital. Then, in the last three years, I have spent three separate months in hospitals as a patient.

Well, here is my word. A hospital might be supposed, by those who do not know much about it, to be a rather depressing place because of the suffering there. But, as a matter of fact, a real hospital is about the most hopeful place this world contains. Most really sick folk outside of a hospital are steadily getting worse until they enter it. As soon as they do enter it, especially if they enter it soon enough, their faces are turned toward health and healing once more.

But there is a bigger reason. It lies in the fact that there was not a hospital in the whole world, until Jesus came. The inspiration to really care for the sick came directly from him. I believe that if we go back far enough in our thinking, we shall find that the skill of every doctor and the consecrated patience of every nurse owes its origin and has its source in him.

But there is something else. Christ is truly by our beds of pain and we can touch the healing of his seamless dress. In a Christian hospital, we can especially do that, because there is so much in such a hospital to lead our thoughts to him. He is the Great Physician today, as always, and I hope the patients, the office staff, the nurses and the doctors will always feel that there are going to be great and increasingly potent ministries of healing in the very atmosphere of your splendid hospital.

I have a word especially for the doctors. I happen to know that doctors are sometimes weary men. All right, here is something to cheer them up and set them thinking. Dr. Henry Ward Beecher was once asked to preach a kind of official sermon to the members of the American Medical Association. His friends were very anxious that he should appreciate the significance of the occasion and choose the right text. So they tried to find out what his text would be but the great preacher declined to confide in them before the event. "Oh," said he, "I think the text, at any rate, will be all right." This was his text. Judge for yourselves whether it was all right. It is in the first book of Chronicles, the sixteenth chapter and the twelfth verse. "And in the 39th year of the reign of Asa, he was diseased in his feet; his disease was exceeding great; yet, in his disease, he sought not to the Lord but to the physicians—and—and Asa slept with his fathers."

Should Coal Be Nationalized?

QUESTION: Don't you think that coal mining ought to be made one of the national monopolies, coal to be exploited only by the nation as a whole, not for private profit?

ANSWER: I have always been an advocate—when asked for my opinion—of the national possession of all natural monopolies. My opinion on that and all other economic subjects is worth no more than anybody else's and, therefore, I only give it when asked for. But here it is:

Mining coal is a national need. Everybody wants coal for some purpose or another. It isn't any individual's or corporation's creation, but the result of age-long natural forces. Everybody profits by cheap, easily accessible coal. Moreover, the scramble for sales and for profits makes the getting of coal excessive, by the time the raw material reaches the consumer. The lost labor owing to frequent strikes is uneconomic and therefore costly to the consumer, which is everybody in the nation. Cheap coal would be of such general benefit, would so quicken industry, would so multiply the number of consumers of everything that depends on cheap coal—which is almost everything whatsoever—that we should all get the benefit in the tremendous increase of the taxable wealth of the nation.

I suppose that is Socialism; but, then, in the days when the mails were run for individual profit, those who advocated that the Government should run the mails, were called Socialists. Now, everybody sees the value of the mails being a Federal monopoly. Some day, everybody will see the necessity of all such national needs being taken care of as national monopolies.

Is Genesis 1, History?

QUESTION: Do you think the first chapter of Genesis is literal history? Why did God inspire it, if it is not true?

ANSWER: I do not believe that the first chapter of Genesis is literal history. If I believed that, I could not believe that the story embedded in the rocks which is also part of the Universal Word of God, is literal history.

Yet, the first chapter is true; just as some of the stories my mother told me at her knee were not literal history but yet were true. They were true because they contained lessons of obedience and love and truth, which things are always true. But when she told me those stories, she just had to accommodate herself to my thought-forms. What would have been the use, in my third year, of explaining to me the scientific process of human generation? She told me that babies came from God, that I, HER baby, came from God, especially. Was that not true?

Just so with the first chapter of Genesis. The folk to whom it was written were, in many senses, children. Was God to wait until they were intellectually grown up before he talked with them at all? So he talked with them, being a very loving Father, in the language they used and understood. But what he taught them there was true, eternally true. For he taught them that God was a lover of order, first of all; then, a lover of light; then, a lover of fruitfulness; then, a lover of all living things and, at last, a lover of man whom he loved so much that he delighted to talk with him.

It's a long while since those words were written but I sometimes wonder whether we have learned all they have to teach us about God, even yet. If we had, we shouldn't squabble so much amongst ourselves about them.

Did Christ Teach a Gospel of Hate?

QUESTION: Do you think that the Gospel of hate which Jesus taught in the 14th chapter of Luke and his teaching to forsake kindred had the tendency to unsettle the very foundations of society? I have never had this subject explained in a satisfactory way.

ANSWER: I do not know that I shall be able to explain it satisfactorily either but I will at least try. First of all, I cannot understand how that chapter could suggest that the Christian should forsake the world in order to avoid evil and Hell. Christ talks in the first part of the chapter about drawing the fallen ox or sheep out of the well and in the 13th verse about interesting ourselves in the lame and halt and blind, the poor and the maimed, if we would be blessed. I don't see how we can do that by withdrawing from the world. Most of our mistakes of that kind are due to the reading of parts of the teaching of Jesus to the exclusion of the whole. I admit that it is done, however.

The word "hate" comes in the latter part of the chapter, where the whole theme of Jesus is that we must count the cost before we start to follow him. He talks about the man who started to build a tower without money enough to finish, and about the king who went to war with too few men. Then, he says, "If a man cometh after me and hateth not his own father and mother and wife and children and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple—so also, whosoever he be of you that renounceth not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple."

I think it is very important to notice that the first verses of the 15th chapter say that then, right then, after those tremendous conditions had just been imposed, "then drew near

unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him." And then, immediately following that, he told his incomparable stories of the lost sheep, the lost coin and the lost son. There is a terrible sternness in Jesus which we have forgotten somewhat lately but there is a tremendous compensating love.

There is no getting round that word "hate." It means "hate" in the Greek and is translated "hate" even in the most modern translations, like Moffatt and Weymouth. But I do not think that Jesus had in mind the terrible, aggressive kind of hate that we picture through this word. He meant, surely, that we were to put everything—even family, even life, second to him and the things he stood for.

I do think that folk who make this verse an excuse for literally indulging in an orgy of hate against their families or who make it an excuse for deserting their families would, if they were numerous, damage the foundations of Society. They are wrong in thinking it teaches monasticism. It simply means that we must, at all costs, put Christ first. Not many folk have really done it. But those who have, have not destroyed Society. Rather, they have reconstructed it in finer ways. St. Francis of Assisi comes to my mind as an instance. He simply had to turn his back on that misunderstanding father of his and leave his home. But the effect was that he did more for human progress, by taking Christ at his word and literally following him, than a regiment of half-hearted Christians.

Most of us don't have to make this choice but I am sure that what Jesus means is that if the choice between home and himself comes, home has to go. But that does not mean a hermitage. That is the most selfish and therefore un-Christ-like form of existence; to abandon Society when it needs the people of Christ so much. No, I don't think Christ is likely to undermine the foundations of Society, except the rotten ones—and they need it.

What Accepting Christ Means

QUESTION: Do you believe that all those who have failed to accept Christ as their divine leader will be eternally damned, even though they have lived lives of high moral standard? John's Gospel, chapter III and verse 18 and Mark, chapter XVI and verse 16 says they will.

ANSWER: I refuse to go any further than the New Testament in my thinking concerning the future of those who reject Christ. That is, of course, the only sound position. Anything else is sheer dogmatism of a very dreadful sort. The 18th verse of the third chapter of John need not be read as referring to eternal punishment as such. This is how it reads—for the benefit of those who have not yet read it—“He that believeth not hath been condemned already because he hath not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God.” The next verse explains it. “This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world and men loved the darkness rather than the light because their deeds were evil.”

It all depends on what you mean by rejecting Christ. The verse seems to mean that a man will be tested by what I may call the gravitation of his life. If that tendency is to reach out and seek after the light—any light—then he will ultimately come to the great light, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

The man who deliberately turns his back to the light, any light, and walks the other way, surely deserves the darkness. But I should read those verses to mean that any time he turns the direction of his life to light, which is what you call a life of high moral standard, the condemnation no longer applies to him.

About Mark, chapter XVI, and verse 16, it may interest you to know that the Gospel of Mark ends at the ninth verse in

the oldest manuscripts. Verse 16 is not included. I think you will find that, apart from this verse, which is not in the most ancient copies of the Gospels, the emphasis is placed rather upon doing than upon mere affirmation of belief. Nobody, surely, imagines that Christ will be content, at the Judgment, with a mere affirmation. When men or women enter these United States, they have to affirm that they are neither polygamists nor anarchists. But I fancy that the government takes a closer review of the lives of suspected persons than that. So, I suppose it will be with Jesus. Paul says we shall be judged for the deeds done in the body and James says in that startling way of his, "Ye believe in God. Thou doest well. The devils also believe and tremble."

The passage my friend quotes from St. Matthew, chapter XXV, the 31st verse, distinctly emphasizes that it is the kind of life we have lived rather than the belief we have professed that will win us eternal life. Listen to the surprised answer of the righteous and you will find they are surprised that they had met Jesus at all. "Then shall they say, Lord when saw we thee hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and visited thee? And he shall say, Inasmuch as ye did it unto the least of these . . . ye did it unto me."

That seems to mean that we accept Christ whenever we accept the doing of a Christ-like thing. One thing I am surer of every day; it won't be church members only who will be saved.

"The ways of God are broader,
Than the measure of man's mind,
And the heart of the eternal
Is most wonderfully kind."

But the kindest heart in all the world cannot make a man who refuses light use his eyes or live in the light if he deliberately and constantly chooses the dark.

Perishing Pagans

QUESTION: If all are to be saved through Christ Jesus, how are those to be saved, who, both before his advent and after, in pagan countries, never even heard his name?

ANSWER: My friend, who has read deeply in the Scriptures, has not read deeply enough. The responsibility for the heathen hearing about Christ is not theirs but ours.

Further let me say that the people who are referred to by Paul as being without God and without hope in the world are the people who deliberately turned themselves to bestiality, not the people who happened to be born in lands where the name of Christ is not yet preached. Personally, I should refuse to believe in a Christ who condemned folk to damnation just because they did not have the same loving parents that I had or who were not blessed with my blond complexion. Nothing seems to me so un-Christian as that dreadful kind of teaching. I do not mean that that is the teaching you hold to, but I am shocked to find so many still holding it.

Is State Killing, Murder?

QUESTION: How far should we carry our application of the Commandment, "Thou shalt not kill?" Does this apply to state killings?

ANSWER: I suppose this is another reaction from the Sacco-Vanzetti execution. We should carry the application of any commandment, either of God or man, just as far as it can be legitimately carried. The Ten Commandments, for instance, were at least foreshadowed in a Babylonian docu-

ment called the Code of Hammurabi which has practically the same group of Commandments.

But that Code also carries with it some instances of how the commandments are to be interpreted. It says, for instance, that if a badly built house falls on its owner and kills him, the builder of the house shall be condemned to death. That seems sound and it should be applied with profit to the makers of insecure ships, buildings, poison liquor and everything that destroys or makes unsafe human life in any way. The same is true of the other commandments. Jesus said that a man who was angry with his brother was guilty of murder and that one who looked lustfully was guilty of adultery.

I am quite sure that Moses did not understand that the commandment against murder applied to state executions, because he provided for state executions. Whether the general application of the commandment will ever include state execution I do not know. There is not a word in the Bible, so far as I can see, against the right of the state to take a life that has taken other life.

Did the Apostles Believe in Reincarnation?

QUESTION: Does not the story of Christ and his disciples at Caesarea Philippi, when they said that he was John the Baptist or Elijah or one of the prophets, indicate that they were believers in reincarnation? What, in your opinion, is the value of reincarnation?

ANSWER: Yes, I think it does up to that point. I mean that up to that point, they were probably believers in

reincarnation. But I'm quite sure they lost all that in the fuller revelation that came to them after the Resurrection.

I don't see the slightest use in any philosophy that has no practical results. What is the use of having been reincarnated, so that this life we are now living is only the second or the hundredth of a series, unless we are sure of that? I remember nothing of my previous existences, if I had any. What is the use of them to me, then?

There used to be an idea that our feeling that we had passed through some experience before or had been in some unfamiliar spot with which yet, somehow, we seemed suddenly familiar—there used to be an idea that this was a kind of re-vivified memory of another, earlier existence. But they have pretty well proved that this is not so but due to the two lobes of the brain picking up the impression of these new surroundings at fractionally different times. So there's nothing to that.

The personal history of most of the Theosophists—Mr. Leadbetter is only one instance—makes me very suspicious of their reincarnational theories. The tree and its fruits are still intimately connected and the life history of some of the proponents of this idea is about as rotten as it can be, from Madame Blavatsky down—or up.

A Cure for Church Gossip

QUESTION: In the first epistle of John, the fifth chapter and the 16th verse, there is a strange passage about prayer and sin which I find it hard to understand. Will you kindly explain it?

ANSWER: Gladly, if I can. Here is the verse in Dr. Moffatt's translation: "If any man see his brother committing a sin that is not deadly, he shall ask and obtain life

for him—for anyone who does not commit a deadly sin. There is such a thing as a deadly sin; I do not mean that he is to pray for that. All iniquity is sin, but there are sins which are not deadly.”

Now, if I were preaching a sermon about that verse, I think I should begin, as usual, on the ground floor. I think I should point out that whatever else the writer meant, whatever difficult things he meant, he did mean that the best thing to do with sin in the church is to pray about it rather than gossip about it. There is no doubt at all about that. It is a very vital part of the Apostle’s teaching which we have not tried very hard to learn.

Listen to another passage. It is the well-known verse in I John, chapter II, verse 2: “If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father”—not “he has an advocate” but, “*we* have an advocate”—all of us, praying for him. So; if any man see his brother committing a sin which is not deadly, he shall ask and obtain life for him. When we learn to pray for each other, we shall have learned half the teaching of Jesus.

But there is that curious phrase “He shall ask and obtain life for him.” Remember that in the Gospel which this same man wrote, he said, in the first chapter, speaking about Christ, “In him was life” and throughout this letter, he expresses the idea frequently that sin is due to the same causes in the soul that disease is in the body. We are surrounded by it all the time. The germs of it are within us all the time.

The difference between a sick man and a well man is not that one has germs of tuberculosis within him and the other has not. We all have those germs. The difference between the sick man and the well man is that the health of the man, his abundant life, keeps them under, while the life in the sick man is too frail, the life stream too sluggish, to do that, and they obtain the mastery. So, says John, having that

view of sin, we are to pray for that spiritually sick man that he may have new accessions of life, of spiritual life, in order to throw it off, so to speak, like a cold.

That is, says the Apostle, if it is not a deadly sin. What does he mean by "a deadly sin"? I don't know. The Fathers said there were seven deadly sins: lust, adultery, murder, and so on. I don't believe that they are any more deadly than some other sins like slander, for instance. Jesus himself taught that there was one sin that was deadly, the unforgivable sin against the Holy Spirit. It was the sin of imputing spiritual results to demoniacal powers. That, as you see, is a slander against the very fountain of goodness and is, in its very nature, unpardonable because it destroys the very realization of Goodness, attributing it to the devil. I think that is what John means here by the deadly sin. If a man attributed the greatest character the world has seen to demons, he is simply out of court, as a little thinking will show you.

But you have struck a passage which has bothered the interpreters all through the centuries. Don't worry about it, except the slander part.

Sin and the After-Life

QUESTION: What does John mean in the 1st epistle of John, chapter III and verse 9 when he says, "Whosoever is begotten of God doeth no sin, because his seed abideth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is begotten of God."

ANSWER: John seems to take two lines in his epistle about sin. In the first chapter, he says that "if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins." In the second chapter and the first verse, he uses the expression, "If any man sin." Obviously, there is an apparent contradiction. I think it is only apparent, however, that John is thinking of sins of deliberation, willful sins and also of sins of error. There are both kinds even in our own families. Children commit sins of error when they put pepper into pies. They know that pies need flavoring but they get the wrong kind of flavoring. But they also commit sins of willful and deliberate disobedience and of flagrant antagonism as young Teddy Roosevelt did when he kneeled down at his Southern mother's knee and asked God to bless the Northern armies because she had corrected him.

In other words, and choosing another kind of illustration, it is always *possible* for a man to sin against the woman he has sworn to cherish, but it is unthinkable, if he loves her. He may do things she would not favor, but he will never flagrantly fly in the face of honor or chastity.

That is the sort of thing John, in the verse you mention, means is impossible. It is unthinkable that a man or woman who is in love with Christ will deliberately outrage his honor or willfully sully the flag of his cross. But he or she may, nevertheless, do things that the larger wisdom of Christ does not approve. That kind of sin can be confessed.

Who Goes to Hell?

QUESTION: Would you mind discussing the seeming contradictions in the Bible regarding universal salvation?

ANSWER: I do not believe in the literal inspiration of every syllable of the Scriptures but believe in a growing revelation of the purposes of God, made complete in Jesus Christ.

If any other Biblical writer contradicts him, I assume that the writer, like some of the rest of us, has not entirely assimilated the teaching of Jesus.

That teaching—of Jesus—is clear and unmistakable. I know of nothing in the teaching of Christ that says anything about universal salvation. I do not find any statement anywhere that the folk we call sinners are going to be eternally shut out from his kingdom.

I do find many places, including that place in Matthew to which your letter refers where we folk who profess much are in constant danger through hypocrisies and intolerances. We are all wrong in our thought that the dirty, unwashed folk are going to Hell. It is the clean and washed folk—clean outside—who look good without being loving and kindly who are in danger of losing eternal life.

That Gift of Tongues

QUESTION: What does I John chapter IV mean when it exhorts us to try the Spirits?

ANSWER: I know the anxiety that lies behind that inquiry because of the private letter that accompanies it. I am therefore going to take a little more time than usual in answering it.

Right from the very beginning the Christian Church has simply been cursed by organizations or persons who claim that they were filled with the Spirit of God, using that claim to make money, or to win for themselves notoriety. There was a man named Simon Magus in the Book of Acts who wanted to buy the gift from Paul that he might use it for money.

One of the gifts of the Spirit that was most coveted was the gift of tongues. It would seem that this was the one gift

of the Spirit that was most prostituted. At first it seems to have been the ability to speak other languages than one's own, or, at any rate, the ability to be understood by people of different speech than one's own.

Later, it seems to have degenerated into a kind of jargon that nobody could understand except the folk who claimed they were initiated. Things became so serious in the Corinthian Church, for instance, that Paul wrote five of the sixteen chapters of his first epistle against those who had generated a false pride because they claimed they had this gift. He says some very strong things against those who profess the gift.

In his list of the gifts of the Spirit, in the 12th chapter, he puts the gift of tongues last, deeming it of small account. That wonderful 13th chapter about love is really a protest against regarding the gift of tongues, among other gifts of the Spirit, as superior to the supreme gift of love. "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal," is the kind of thing he says about it. In the 14th chapter, he comes out much stronger against this dangerous and much abused gift.

By this time, those who had the gift of tongues, as they professed, had become just babblers as they are today, and he says to them in the 9th verse, "So also ye, unless ye utter by the speech easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? For ye speak into the air." In the 19th verse he says, "I thank God, I speak with tongues more than ye all; howbeit, in the church I would rather speak five words that can be understood, than ten thousand words in a tongue. In the 23rd verse, coming out more strongly still he says, "Will they not say that ye are mad?"

Now as I understand it, by the time of John's epistle, there were those who were standing up in the churches and opposing the common sense of the church on the pretence that they had this special gift and a special revelation from God for their

own benefit. That is why John exhorts the Church to try the Spirits. The way to try them is to take the common sense of the Church, by which I mean the opinion that is common to the Church. The Spirit of God is the spirit of sanity. Eccentricities are an abomination to it. There is one sure way of trying any spirit. If it means some comfortable pickings for somebody or some group, it is not of the Spirit of God. The gift of tongues became one of the withdrawn gifts of the Spirit because of the way in which it was prostituted and my own experience of those who have claimed it in these days is that they were either epileptic or that they were charlatans, or frauds.

The necessity for trying the Spirits was never greater than today. Lives are being ruined and crooks are being fattened by folk who refuse to take reasonable delay before they do what somebody tells them God has inspired them to do. I have known minds to be shipwrecked and fortunes dissipated that way. You may be quite sure of this, if God reveals himself to one as desiring him to do something out of the common, God will also impress that same thought on the mind of some other sane person. He revealed himself to Saul on the way to Damascus but he also revealed himself to a man in the city. He revealed himself to Cornelius but he revealed himself to Peter. He always gives us an opportunity to check up on these alleged revelations.

An Experience From My Boyhood

QUESTION: Do you think it is possible for anybody to answer questions about God to somebody else's satisfaction? Did you ever have anybody interpret any spiritual question for you in a way



that gave you entire satisfaction and put you at ease? I am really sincere in asking these questions.

ANSWER: I don't need my brother's assurance that he is perfectly sincere. The questions are quite right and very sensible. Of course, I do think we can help each other by comparing notes about our spiritual difficulties, else I should not be spending my time in preparation for this hour. You know that I try my hardest not to be dogmatic or too positive, except about the really fundamental things. But I do think we gain enormously by thinking these things out man to man with charity and sweetness of spirit.

I owe my soul to a man who dealt with me that way when I was about eighteen. He was a very clever man and a very human man, even though he was a pastor. I went to him in some trouble. I had been reading, as I always have all through my life, a great deal of science. It happened that I had been reading, just then, a book about the existence of the soul. The writer of the book had said that the idea that men had souls came from the gluttony of primitive man.

He said that primitive man was a hunter, which may be true. He went on to say that after a hunt, primitive man sat down to a meal too large for him and the consequence was that when he went to sleep, he had nightmare and dreamed that he was away hunting again. When he woke, he felt that he really had been away from the place where he fell asleep. But his fellow hunters assured him that his body had not moved. His explanation was that there must be two of him—the part that had lain sleeping and the part that had been away hunting in the night—soul and body. Well, that was so clever that it troubled me and I went to the clever man who happened to be my pastor at that time.

He listened to me and then went on smoking and talking about other things. I thought he had ignored my troubled

question. But presently he said, "Well, I'm going to walk home with you, Copeland." It was a fine night of full moon. Presently, he said, as we walked together, "Copeland, I haven't answered your question—not because I could not, but because I know that, with your kind of mind, there will be many more disturbing questions for you before you are through. Here is the big question. What do you think about Jesus Christ? Do you think him worth making your example? Supposing he is a myth—is it worth living as if he were real?"

I remember that I said I thought it was worth while. Then, said he, do that. I've tried to do that ever since and I've come to know, in my very bones, that he is real. Many questions have troubled me since then. I have them now. Faith is always a fight to a thinking man, but that is my answer to you. That pastor saved me from the folly and despair of an agnosticism that would never have brought me any satisfaction or have enabled me to find steam for the engine of my energy. And ever since then, I've wanted to do that same kind of thing for other folk, the kind of thing that man did for me. That's how this Question Box came into existence. I hope that, eventually, it will help you and thousands more.

Hang Theology?

QUESTION: Since all theological attempts to explain God are human and therefore faulty, would it not be best to give up attempts to be theological and just read the story, accepting it for what it is?

ANSWER: I quite agree that all theological attempts are human. Being human, they are feeble, fragmentary, faulty. But that is not a reason for despising them. It is when we are wrestling with something too big to entirely capture, that we are most akin to the divine. It is when we are

attempting to climb the heights that are inaccessible that our heads are nearest to the stars. And humanity is so constructed that the more impossible a task is, especially a task of thought, the more determined humanity is to achieve.

We ought to ask ourselves why that is so, and why, if that be so, the desire to achieve the impossible has been implanted in us. It looks as though the Divine, who created us, had it in mind to enable us to reach the inaccessible at last—given time enough; or eternity enough.

Moreover, the most absurd and imperfect theological attempt to describe the Divine does give us some hint, some glimpse, if the attempt is made honestly. Take photography; it is a human art. Being human, it, also, is imperfect. It must be because it is an attempt to print on a flat surface what, after all, is a thing of contours and protuberances. Photography gets the effect of protuberance by light and shade. Often, the light is too glaring and the shadow too deep. But there was never a photograph that did not tell us something about the thing or person it attempted to portray. So it is with the attempt of theology to portray the Divine to human minds.

Do We Make God in Our Image?

QUESTION: Do you not think that the God of Moses was simply Moses' conception of God and nothing more?

ANSWER: The questioner suggests that we all create God in our own image. Moses, being a very aggressive type of person, trying to create a nation out of a rabble of slaves, was emphasizing law and was somewhat ruthless in his application of it. The God he conjured up in his own mind was naturally so like himself as to *be* himself. That is the argu-

ment. It's a good argument but, like most of our arguments, it has holes in it. Here is one. If Moses' God was Moses' creation, how came it that Moses' God reproved Moses, even to the extent of forbidding him entrance into Canaan?

Behaviorism and Mind

QUESTION: How does the Behavioristic psychology treat the problem of the fundamental nature of mind?

ANSWER: Behaviorism seems to me to treat mind in a purely physical way. For instance, it treats mind itself as consisting of the whole nervous system of man, including the brain and even the larynx, but nothing else; nothing beyond that material and manifest thinking and feeling machinery. For instance again, it professes to read the secrets of the mental processes from the movements of the larynx, which seem to involuntarily accompany brain processes.

I should say from what I know of Behaviorism that it is entirely materialistic, like most of our other philosophies nowadays, attributing all our impulses to physical bases and inspirations—if I may use that phrase—and attributing our ideals to the secretions of our ductless glands and things of that kind.

While I am convinced that we have not credited the bodily functions, including those of sex, with all the influence they undoubtedly deserve in the matter of emotion and ideality, it is simply anti-Christian to say that mind is a reaction of bodily processes against other physical conditions.

The Christian view that the mind is the circumferential part of the soul, which, again, is the circumferential part of the Universal Spirit—that mind working through but not absolutely identified with physical processes—seems to be a much more practical theory than any other.

Kill Which Babies?

QUESTION: What do you think of the proposal by Clarence Darrow to kill off all defective babies to improve the race?

ANSWER: Well, the joker in the pack is that there are only a very tiny fraction of defective babies; I mean, of course, of babies actually deformed before birth; not deformed in the act of birth. As for moral defects at birth it is practically impossible to detect these, even if there are any, which really modern biologists doubt.

That Jukes-Edwards theory that heredity has very much to do with the kind of men and women we are is pretty well exploded. You know the theory, that if you happen to be a descendant of Jonathan Edwards you cannot easily avoid becoming a president of these United States or, at least, the wife of the president; while, if you happen to be the descendant of somebody named Jukes, you are pretty sure to be hanged.

The most modern science, in spite of Mr. Wiggam, who did so much to make that theory well-known, says that that kind of teaching, besides being the most hopeless possible, is scientifically just nonsense and not to be relied upon at all. Indeed, the most modern biologists of all state that all we inherit is the possibility of something, not even a tendency towards it. That is a fine and really Christian discovery of biological science and ought to be known to everybody who was cursed by a drunken father or mother; or by an ancestry that was in any way deformed or defective. What we have to be scared of is very early environment, sometimes, the very earliest environment of all. For instance, they used to say that children were born syphilitic. That seems to be no longer true but gloriously untrue. But the baby can be infected from the mother in the very act of being born. So, morally, there is no age too young

for environment to affect the child. Bad habits start being formed long before babies leave the cradle.

But, so far as being born is concerned, what the world ought to know is that God loves it so much that so far as in him lay, he took good care that every new-born baby was really an entirely new opportunity for this old world to begin entirely anew. Science and the Gospel meet each other there.

How Will Christ Come?

QUESTION: What will take place when Christ returns to earth again? Is the Church—or the Christian people—the bride of Christ to reign with him, and, if so, who are they to reign over?

ANSWER: There is one thing that I want to point out about the Second Coming of Christ, as it is called. The Scriptures nowhere call it a second coming. That expression was apparently never used until much later than the writing of the New Testament. The New Testament always calls it “The Appearing.” The Greek word used always means a “Revelation,” a “Manifestation.” You will always find in the margin of the Standard Version or any modern version that word “appearing.” It is very important because it corroborates the statement of Jesus that he would be with us always. The difference at the end will be that then he will be visibly present as now he is invisibly present.

The teaching of Scripture about the Advent of Jesus is confusing. For instance, while Revelation speaks about the Millennium, or the thousand years of peace before the final advent of Jesus Christ, no other book in the New Testament speaks of this. Practically every New Testament book does speak quite conclusively of that advent—as distinctly from the Millennium that precedes it.

I think that the first verse of the second chapter of Hebrews best answers your question. "We see not yet all things put under the feet of man," says the writer, "but we see Jesus crowned with glory and honor." The final reign can be understood as the reign of the Lord and his Church over the whole of the universe: a reign undisputed and complete. That is, a reign without the opposition of evil, either in our own lives, in nature, or in the policies of man.

The bride is the Church—the whole Church—without any more divisions or controversies. That means the whole body of Christian believers everywhere in every age and every land, of every color and every speech—all who call upon the name of the Lord Jesus. That again means those who shape their lives by him and walk in his commandments. There is no justification anywhere in the New Testament for narrowing that to any sect or denomination. The bride is the whole composite body of Christian believers of every kind.

The Big Thing About Lindbergh

QUESTION: What do you regard as the big thing about Captain Lindbergh's flight across the Atlantic?

ANSWER: There are many big things about it. One of them is the youth of the boy who did it. We think of twenty-four as a careless—or, at any rate, a carefree age. And we are apt to think of Capt. Lindbergh's flight as one of those happy-go-lucky things that happened to come off successfully.

As the story is unfolded, we are coming to see that it was nothing of the kind. It was the result of years of thought on the part of this silent youth; of careful calculation of stresses and strains and of capacities calculated to a nicety; of studies of drift and the unreliability of compasses and things of that kind. It was a distinct case of an old head on young shoulders

combined with a sublime courage and a daring that was by no means so reckless as we are apt to think the courage of twenty-four generally is.

Then, of course, this boy has the modesty of youth, the untarnished bloom of his strength still preserved. I wish I could make the youth of this generation hear me when I say that the significant thing about this boy is that he is pure, seemingly both in body, which is easy, and in mind, which is more difficult. President Coolidge picked that out as very worthy of comment. He called it "his unspoiled youth." Unspoiled youth is unsoiled youth. There is not a stain upon it. He did not drink, even in Paris. He has all the unrivalled beauty of a clean body. His modesty is a thing to marvel at in modern America and a thing to praise God for.

But I myself think that the crowning marvel is his unwillingness to be bought. That is the temptation which twenty-four finds it hardest to resist. Yet millions have been placed at this youth's feet if he will only commercialize his ideal. He has, so far, refused them all. That is a tremendous thing, for the youth of America, as an object lesson of where true greatness lies. Here is one who has an ideal and who has determined to steadily pursue it, unswerved and unmoved by any consideration that would dim that ideal.

It is an ideal that is intended to benefit the whole nation and the whole wide world. That is the big thing. We ought to thank God for it and tell the story of Lindbergh to every boy in America, putting the emphasis in the story where it properly belongs.

Christian Amusements

QUESTION: Can a Christian indulge in dancing, movies, card playing, smoking and such things?

ANSWER: Of course, he can—so can she; provided that no violence is done to a conscience sensitively trained by doing so. I put that qualification in because some of us sear our consciences or so neglect them that we no longer hear them if they speak, or feel their prick, because they have lost the sharp edge of their needle. Then, we say that conscience does not tell us not to do this or that—and think we have cheated God for ever.

But there is nothing wrong in cards or dances or theatres of themselves. What is wrong is to become obsessed by them or anything else that causes us to lower our ideals or neglect social or domestic duties. I once knew a lady who was so possessed by the desire to attend religious conventions that her babies were neglected. She would have done much less harm in the world if she had taken a mild course of the theatre, or anything else mildly. You simply cannot dogmatize about these things.

Anyhow, I have said again that Christianity isn't a set of prohibitions—a lot of notices to keep off the grass. It's an inward attitude to Jesus Christ—not to his teaching, merely, but to him—an attitude that, so to speak, takes the helm of your life and guides you toward the big purposes and the high unselfish ideals. We are being cursed by the number of our "Thou shalt nots."

Is Dancing Wicked?

QUESTION: Can a Christian, apart altogether from the rightness or wrongness of these things, find time for them consistently with his Christian profession?

ANSWER: It all depends on the individual Christian. I simply detest laying down arbitrary laws for anybody but myself. I can dance and I can play cards. But because I have

done neither for twenty years, I should be a back number both with auction bridge or the Charleston. They did neither when I danced and played cards.

But I'm quite sure I personally need some mental relaxation. After a morning with the kind of sorrows and difficulties and shames that I get sometimes in my mail, and because of it, I feel that I want a new kind of bath—some deep and obliterating experience that will let me come forth clean and strong again. Now, there are folk who find that in cards or dancing. I should say that those amusements might suit them admirably if they do not lose their heads. Another factor—the one that prevented me from going on with these particular amusements—was that I had to do with folk who had gone to the dogs through over-indulgence in one or other of these amusements. Paul laid down the Christian rule, "All things are lawful but all things are not expedient." And that other, "If anything make my brother to offend, I will not do that thing," In his case, it was meat offered to idols and afterwards sold in the meat-markets. He saw no sin in eating it. But more sensitive persons did. Hence, like the fine Christian he was, he abstained from the thing that might cause difficulty to them. That is the essence of the Christian spirit; the spirit of service and sacrifice. If we are ruled by that spirit, we need no laws.

Was It Pilate or Christ?

QUESTION: After your sermon last Sunday morning, when you claimed that real success was only won by service and even sacrifice, some of my friends said that facts were facts and that bootleggers and crooks were among the really successful folk of today. What can I say to them?

ANSWER: Well, I don't want to be rude enough to say that if your friends regard bootlegging as a successful form of commerce just now, you should change your friends, but apart from any moral consideration, it is not the occupation that a timid man like myself would choose. The mortality rate among bootleggers is rather high. If that means success, it is not my conception of success.

But is success getting rich at any price of morals? Is that what your friends mean by success? If so, the selling of what the dope fiends call "snow" is a much more profitable occupation even than peddling moonshine liquor. It is true that you leave a widening trail of twisted minds and drug-maddened bodies behind you but what of that if it means that you can exchange your Ford car for a Cadillac? There's a risk that you may get to like "snow" yourself and that in Leavenworth it will be worse than hell because you cannot get it, but that's another risk you must take.

Your friends haven't taken stock of their own philosophy and its meanings. I'm getting older and the older I get, the more I suspect that the real happiness lies in being able to say, "My meat is doing the will of my Father." That inner satisfaction is worth more than gold, though your friends haven't discovered it yet. William Wetmore Storey wrote a poem called "Io Victis." Here are a few lines from it:

"They only the victory win,
Who have fought the good fight and have vanquished the
demon that tempts us within;
Who have held to their faith unseduced by the prize that
the world holds on high;
Who have dared for a high cause to suffer, resist, fight—
if needs be, to die.
Speak History! Who are life's victors? Unroll thy long
annals and say,

Are they those whom the world called the victors, who won the success of a day?

The martyrs, or Nero? The Spartans who fell at Thermopylæ's tryst,

Or the Persians and Xerxes? His judges or Socrates? Pilate or Christ?

Well, what *does* history actually say? Was it Pilate or Christ? That answer gives you the answer, whatever it may be in your own mind, to the great universal answer to the whole question in every life.

This Volstead Nonsense?

QUESTION: In view of the growing reports of bootlegging and blind pigs, don't you think we had better end this Volstead nonsense?

ANSWER: Which Volstead nonsense? Do you mean the good law or the rotten method of its enforcement? My own impression is that there are more bootleggers being prosecuted and more blind pigs being revealed than ever before. The anti-prohibitionist press gives publicity to all of them; I don't know why, because it seems to me that the new activity of enforcement officers is not likely to be encouraging to the anti-prohibitionists.

No, on the question of law enforcement, I am a follower of Theodore Roosevelt. He said, the best test of whether a law is good or bad, is to enforce it. If it is good, its enforcement will prove its goodness. If it is bad, its enforcement will prove its badness. Let's rigidly enforce every law, good or bad. If it's bad, the people will soon get it changed. If it's good, they won't want to.

I think the first slackening of our tremendous prosperity since prohibition is coming. I also think that an era of

slighter and more patchy prosperity will reveal how much prohibition has done to fortify us against the rainy day.

The Anti-Saloon League and Smith

QUESTION: What is your comment on the denunciation by Stanley High of the Anti-Saloon League? His denunciation was chiefly concerned with the League's championship and endorsement of Senator Smith.

ANSWER: Stanley High is an official minister of the Methodist Church. He is one of our youngest ministers, being around thirty-two years of age. The significance of his denunciation lies in the fact that he is one of the most prominent of the leaders of the youth of the church. My comment can be expressed best by the statement that when I read his tremendous castigation, I wrote him saying, "God bless you, Stanley High."

The Anti-Saloon League is sometimes described as the spearhead of the churches and particularly, of the Methodist Church. I am absolutely in favor of prohibition if it can be enforced honestly. It is not being enforced honestly and the result is that law-makers and law-upholders are coming to think of all law with contempt. That—if it is carried far enough—will eat away the very foundations of democratic government which is based on a fundamental respect for and observance of law. That respect, again, is based on a general ethical standard, running right through the life of the people. Any organization that endorses a candidate who while occupying an office from the people, for the protection of the people from great financial interests, yet takes slush money from the very interests he is appointed to protect the people

from, is a traitor to the fundamental principles of American government. Any organization that, just because that man happens to give lip service to the Eighteenth Amendment, gives him its endorsement, has done violence to those ethical principles for which the churches stand.

If the churches do not stand for that, they may as well shut up shop, so far as the youth of the churches,—the most honest part of their constituency—is concerned. The Anti-Saloon League has illustrated, in a terrible way, that fanaticism can be the most immoral thing in the world, and has deserved every condemnatory word that Stanley High said about it. God bless him and every other man who has the courage to oppose himself to the general ethical lethargy of the churches.

Predestination

QUESTION: Do you believe in Predestination?

ANSWER: That question is only part of a long letter from which I want to read a longer extract. Here it is: "A very learned Bible student taught our Sunday School class last summer. I have been taught that if Judas had repented, after betraying Christ, he would have been saved. But this teacher claims that Judas was born for this purpose—to fulfil the Scriptures and that everyone of us is born with a definite purpose; no matter what we do, we cannot get away from it. If this be true, what is the use of churches and missionaries? We are taught that Jesus is a kind and loving Savior but if Judas was born to betray Christ, and does so, fulfilling his mission in life, why should he be eternally damned?"

My answer to that question is that Predestination as thus taught is an insult to God and about the most depressing and pessimistic doctrine that could be promulgated among us humans. It is not Christian, at all, but simply the out-of-date

scientific teaching on the effects of heredity, in another form, that existed among some of the Jews, long before the time of Christ. It is illustrated as a popular superstition in the case of the disciples asking Christ, "Master, did this man or his parents sin, that he was born blind?" I hope you remember the scornful answer of Jesus.

It seems to me that you have answered your own question in part. The teaching of a limited predestination is totally at variance with His character and teaching. "God so loved the world—," said John. "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold," said Jesus. "Them also I must bring that there may be one flock, one shepherd." But what he said is nothing to what his general attitude was. He taught the Universal Fatherhood of God and that our human race was a family.

You can never go wrong when you think these things out in terms of the family. Is it conceivable that any father worth the name, would ordain that one or several of his children should be predestined to be out of the family? That does not mean that it is not possible for one or more of the children to put themselves out of the family. Judas did, though I'm not going to be so positive as to say that even he did that eternally.

No, there are slight traces of a teaching of predestination in the Bible; but it is a universal predestination to salvation, to life, not to damnation and death. Even if it were argued that Paul teaches a predestination to death, that would not affect my belief in the universal saviorhood of Christ. When Paul and Jesus seem to differ, I take my stand with Jesus.

Here's something else. Trust your own feeling about Christ and his teaching. I get a lot of letters against the Pope but it sometimes seems to me that folk create their own popes when they fail to trust their own interpretation of the Scriptures and their own thought about Christ. My people here make me their

pope when they take what I say concerning the teaching of Christ as final without their own reading and thought. That's wrong. And that is why I try always to be so careful to say here that this or that is simply my own opinion.

The best theology for you is that which is forged on the anvil of your own hard thinking after diligent search of the Scriptures, not weighing each part of the Scriptures equally, but always making Christ the touchstone of everything. At the same time, listen to everybody with what respect you can, including this Question Box. We try here, not to be dogmatic, but reasonable. Above everything else, we want to put the authority of Christ supreme—above Paul, above the ablest Bible teacher who ever lived; above everybody and everything. He is the final arbitrator.

Should Salacious Literature Be Censored?

QUESTION: What is your opinion of magazines of the type I mention in this letter? If you are opposed to them, would you mind saying whether they should be censored so that boys and girls of high school age may be saved from reading them?

ANSWER: I am rigidly opposed to almost every form of censorship and think that the way to make folk, especially young folk, curious about anything is to forbid them to read it or do it. You know what Mark Twain said about the apple. He said, "The woman ate the apple not because she wanted it but because it was forbidden. The mistake was in not forbidding the serpent. Then she would have eaten that." Even now, half these illicit magazines are read just because they are more or less under a ban.

Moreover, I agree with Lynn Harold Hough that very few men are good enough to be trusted with unrestricted power, as the power of a censor would be. It would develop into a very dangerous form of tyranny. We saw something of that during the war.

If parents would take the advice of the folk who know, and tell their children before the matter becomes an object of curiosity with them, the whole of the facts about sex—the whole of the facts, without any sentimental twaddle, but as coldly and scientifically as they would tell facts about astronomy, much of this illicit curiosity would be avoided. I heard about a boy the other day whose father had, at a comparatively early age, told him everything—everything. Another boy began to tell this well-instructed boy a salacious story when the boy stopped him by saying, “Shucks, I’ve known about that for years and you’ve got it wrong, anyway.” That kind of boy is in less danger than the half-instructed boy or girl, either from salacious magazines or from any similar source.

Youth and the Lipstick

QUESTION: Please give me your honest opinion of the use of rouge, lipsticks and short skirts.

ANSWER: I don’t want to because I don’t believe that my honest opinion is worth anything at all. You see, I’m getting near to fifty and that outclasses me. I don’t believe that any man over thirty-five is qualified to pass judgment on the matter. I was brought up in a generation that honestly believed that any woman who used lipsticks and rouge was a bad woman. She generally was. Ask your father, or, better, your mother. Short skirts simply WERE NOT. I remember a female cousin of mine coming into our home when I was a

young boy and saying that she had been stopped on the street by a gentleman telling her that he thought she was holding her skirt too high. She was holding it about seven inches above the floor. No, in my day, they preferred that skirts should be eight inches *below* the sidewalk and have six inches of microbe deposit on them all round.

Now, the difficulty is that these things were so in the years when the men of my generation were passing through their impressionable years. Those are the years when you get ideas rooted in your minds and these become preconceptions in after years, simply making valuable opinions impossible, because the opinions we old fogies hold are so fearfully biased. So, please don't ask me, though, personally, I believe with all my heart in the majority of the present fashions in female dress. I'm a little nervous lest the girls should overdo the lipstick and paint business, however, but then, they don't do it for me, so what has it to do with anything I think?

Would Light Wines Cure Us?

QUESTION: Consider the vast amount of harm that is being done amongst young people by the hip flask, don't you think that the public sale of light wines and beers ought to be welcomed as a step in the right direction?

ANSWER: Even if I did, I don't think there is the slightest chance of light wines and beers coming into public vogue in this country. \$2,500,000,000 of money that previously went into the saloon business to the destruction of health and prosperity is now going to make more and better homes, stronger industries with more consequent employment and general all-round improvement of public wealth and fitness.

Apart from the fighters on both sides, I believe that the average American, when it comes to a show-down, will see this and will also see to it that no retrograde step is taken against the prosperity of the country.

But I don't believe in this hip flask business. That does not mean that I do not believe that a certain number of young fools of both sexes are using hip flasks. Like every other violation of the eighteenth amendment, this habit of a small minority is enlarged upon to the slandering of the general youth of this nation, out of all proportion to the facts.

Third, a taste for whisky is not cured by light wines and beers. Once a man has the whisky habit, he needs whisky to keep it alive. Nothing weaker will do. It's just moonshine to say that light wines and beers will stop folk drinking moonshine. They haven't enough kick in them, as any moonshine drinker will tell you. But if you really want a good moonshine drinker's opinion, you had better get it quick. They are dying off very fast and that is going to be the ultimate solution of the whisky business in America.

Luck and Predestination

QUESTION: What is your opinion of Predestination? To me it is the most obnoxious word in the Bible, but the older I grow the more I am forced to believe in it.

ANSWER: The word predestination does not occur in the Bible at all, though the verb, predestinate, does. I do not find it obnoxious, at all, because, while I believe in predestination, I also believe that God willeth that all men everywhere should repent. That predestinates everybody to salvation. By that I mean that, so far as the desire and purpose of God is concerned, men will be saved, though their own free-will may

enable them to succeed in defeating the purposes of God to their own destruction.

Then, you go on to tell me your life story and ask me if I believe that one person is born unlucky and another lucky. I don't. I certainly don't think that predestination has anything to do with one's success in business. The Bible word has only to do with the salvation of the soul. Success in business would be a bad thing for some men.

I always have a feeling that if Abraham Lincoln had won out in some of his earlier battles, he might have been content with what he had won and America might never have known him. He never was successful, in the worldly sense. Even as President, he only had six weeks of the Presidency of a united nation. His story, both in business, in love, and in his political career, was all battle, tragedy and weariness. Yet what a legacy he left to America.

H. G. Wells reckons him as one of the seven greatest men that humanity has known. The other six were all what we should call unlucky, today. Socrates died of poison, Jesus died of crucifixion. Buddha had to give up wife, children, everything. The Emperor Asoka of Japan, the Messiah of the East, did the same. I am speaking from memory but I think the same was true of every one of the seven greatest men that Wells names as the greatest men the world has known. If so, what do you mean by success and luck?

I have a little cottage on the other side of Lake Michigan where I am spending weeks just now in preparing my answers to these questions. It happened that while I was thinking over the answer to your question a fog came over the lake. Everything was blotted out. Everything was murky and obscure. Then, the sun shone out and things became even more clear than they generally are. That sometimes happens after fog. How wonderfully clear everything was. Paul says,

"Now, we see through a glass darkly." And there is no doubt about that.

You speak of a man much luckier than you. Well, that makes it more difficult for him. I was born in England and still get some English newspapers. There's an old abbey there that is falling into ruin. Do you know which wall is in greatest danger? The south wall. The sun has done more damage to the stone than a thousand years of north wind.

Can Protestantism Combine?

QUESTION: Don't you think that if the Protestant churches combined as one denomination, they would accomplish more than now?

ANSWER: I most certainly do. Of course, the divisions of Protestantism follow certain psychological types. I mean that there are really folk who are born Baptists by temperament and Methodists by temperament and so on. The divisions of Protestantism are also the protest of an increasingly free humanity against anything like regimentation in religion.

But the joker in the pack is that there never was a time when the theological differences between the churches were so slight as now and there never was a time when the Protestant churches were so severely regimented as now. Congregationalism is based on the independence of the individual church, yet Congregationalism is all linked up, church with church, in a perfectly astonishing way. Baptists don't insist very strongly on immersion. At any rate, there are numerous Baptists who don't and, speaking about Methodists, I'm not sure that fifty per cent know what the fundamental emphasis of Methodism is.

Yet, here we are, not only divided from each other, but actually fighting each other with solid cash in millions, in the form of missionary money for the maintenance of dying

churches and villages in small towns where there are often ten churches instead of the necessary two or three.

The Causes of National Decay

QUESTION: I understand that you think that history repeats itself. Do you think that the leading countries, like England, America, and France, are therefore heading the same way as Rome?

ANSWER: There are spiritual laws governing the life of nations, just as those same laws govern the lives of individuals. If England, or America, break those laws, they will die, as ancient Rome died. But it will not be because of some kind of predestined doom, but because they broke the law. Immorality, extravagance, irreligion, are the causes of national decay.

Can the Universe Die?

QUESTION: What is your view of the cyclical theory of energy in the universe and do you think that the universe is getting older and less energetic?

ANSWER: I understand the cyclical theory of energy in the universe to be that there was a gigantic period, millions of millions of years long, during which the total of life and energy in the universe was waxing and growing. There is another period, in the midst of which we are now supposed to be, during which that energy is waning and diminishing. That is what I understand the cyclical theory to be, but I don't know how it can be more than a theory.

How can the sum total of life and energy in the universe be measured? If it is to be measured, are we not in danger

of forgetting to measure something? For instance, if it had all been measured one hundred years ago, might not the scientists of that age have left entirely out of all calculation, the energy reposing in atoms and electrons? Indeed, it's pretty certain they would because they knew nothing about atoms or electrons. It's a serious omission because they tell me that if one atom explodes, it is going to smash the world, and there are 30,000 in one drop of water—or so they tell me. But if the scientists left all that energy out of count, one hundred years ago, how do we know the world is losing power?

Henry Norton Russell, whose significance in science you will appreciate better than I, and that tremendously clever astronomer of Cambridge, England, Professor Eddington, say there is nothing to the cyclical theory. I'm going to trust them for the period of my own lifetime, anyhow.

Ought We to Be Tempted?

QUESTION: Ruth Snyder wrote an article in which she said that a little girl had asked her how God could allow men like Gray to be alive in order to undermine the morals of folk like herself. Ruth Snyder said that she had often wondered about that herself. So have I. What can you say about it?

ANSWER: Ruth Snyder thought that an omnipotent God would not allow Gray to tempt her. I have not heard Gray's account of it, but I daresay that he wondered why an omnipotent God allowed Ruth Snyders around.

The real question seems to be whether God is omnipotent in a world of men and women. And my answer is that he is not. There was a point in history up till when he was absolutely omnipotent. That was until the moment when man was

created. At that moment, and by that act, God sacrificed his omnipotence in order to create a being who could have fellowship with himself. That was the price he paid for the creation of the human free-will. For, of course, the human will is free. Society is founded on that fact.

We hold men responsible for what they do because we regard them as free either to do it or not to do it. That is why we are fond of baseball. If the striker had to strike the ball, whether he wanted to strike it or not, there would be no baseball crowds and no baseball scandals. Trial by jury would be a folly if we had only to judge men and women who couldn't help doing what they did. They would never be guilty.

It was an enormous risk that God took. But he could not have made the man that would be worthy of the divine companionship without taking that risk and making that sacrifice. An automatically good man would have been a mere machine. God has enough machines already.

The experiment has been justified. Man has chosen the better, rather than the worse, all through history, in spite of the Grays and Snyders, who are a very small minority. Progress has been made. It's a long time since the cave man and the cave man is a long way below us. We really have done a lot of climbing. Man is more godlike, more human, more tender, more chaste, more sober today than ever. He is justifying the divine experiment and we should all rejoice and take courage.

The Star of Bethlehem

QUESTION: Is there any astronomical justification for the idea that there was an actual star of Bethlehem?

ANSWER: I'm not much of an astronomer, but I was interested to notice a news item the other day from Cambridge, Massachusetts, which said that the comet now appear-

ing (December, 1927) in the western heavens may have been the star of Bethlehem. Comets have an elliptical orbit and do not recur, in their appearing to our eyes, with complete regularity, as stars do, as planets do. Halley's comet was long regarded as the star of Bethlehem, appearing as it did at very irregular intervals, through the ages; apparently about every seventy-six years.

But I think we miss one of the points of the story if we think of the Star of Bethlehem like that. Halley's comet is a very big affair, visible to everybody when it appears, lighting up the whole sky. The star of Bethlehem was not of that order. Herod would have known something about it, instead of being entirely ignorant of it as told in Matthew II, verse 7. These men got their knowledge of it by very deep research and in conditions that excluded the use of powerful telescopes.

Nobody seems to have known anything about it except themselves and perhaps other Magi throughout the world. Their merit just lay in that; that they had the faith to follow the very dim gleam of light they had, fully trusting it. It brought them through.

Is Christmas a Pagan Festival?

QUESTION: Is Christmas a pagan or a Christian Festival?

ANSWER: It is a Christian festival and the more so because it contains so many of what you call pagan elements. The mistletoe was the emblem, among the Druids, of life derived from life, because it had no root of its own, so far as they understood, but derived its life from another plant. It also typified the continuance of life because it was one of the plants which winter did not kill. I daresay that the holly and other evergreens had the same symbolism to them and to other pagan religionists.

But a thing is not wrong because it is pagan, and because a religious or social practice had its origin in some pagan idea does not mean that we must despise it. Paganism, at its best, was man's groping for that Light which lighted every man, and a true pagan, working and walking by the light he had, might be just as acceptable to God as many a Christian.

It was the same with the yule log. On December 21, probably the old Christmas Day, the sun passes out of the winter solstice of the heavens. The sun was the God of Fire and the God of Life, but, having descended to the low shining of the 20th day of December, he began to increase his shining after that day and was, in a sense, reborn.

Then came Christianity and after a time, Christianity became dominant over the old pagan ideas. Not entirely at first; not entirely now. And the Christian Church, with some wisdom, as I think, gathered up these old pagan symbols and made them express the fuller truth of Christ. I think it is a fine symbol of the catholicity of the ancient church that it could take these old symbols and charge them with the new Christian meaning. I wish we were better able to do that with some of the pagan ideas of the pagan peoples of the world today.

Christianity is not something to be set over against other expressions of the universal religious craving in the soul of man. It is the summing up of all those ideas and hungers and we ought to gather them into it more effectively than we have done lately.

The English Church Prayer Book

QUESTION: Can you tell the public what the row in England concerning the new Prayer Book is about?

ANSWER: Briefly, there are two parties in the English Church: the High Church and the Low Church. The High

Church party says that the ancient English Episcopal Church did some things that today are regarded as illegal but which are necessary for the proper observance of the services of the Lord's House. They say that everything depends on what was done in the second year of the reign of King Edward VI who died in 1553. The claim is that then, confession was practised in the English Church and lavish ceremonial vestments were worn before the altar, making the Sacrament much more like the Roman Mass than it is in Protestant Churches. Indeed, I think they claim that the English Church is not Protestant, in that the English Reformation was merely political, being the effort of King Henry VIII to throw off the authority of the pope merely to add another wife to his already large collection. Prayers for the dead are also involved in the same question.

Thus, for twenty years an attempt has been made to so revise the Prayer Book of the church as to go back to these ancient—and as some think—Roman customs. In addition, there is the vexed question—in England it is still a vexed question, though here it seems to have been settled against the husband—of whether a wife should promise to obey her husband.

The English Church being a State Church and the Prayer Book being one of the laws of England, the Parliament had to authorize the use of the new Prayer Book. In the House of Lords, the Senate of the Parliament, there are, I think, forty bishops and they carried the bill for the new Prayer Book but by a slight majority. The lower house, consisting of elected representatives of the people, threw out the proposed changes.

Agreeing With a Cardinal!

QUESTION: What is your answer to one of the latest bans placed by the Roman Catholic Church on

that song, Beautiful Isle of Somewhere? It is often requested over the radio and used at funerals. Why should they have banned it?

ANSWER: The answer is, they haven't, so far as I am aware. All that happened was that one of the American Cardinals, I think His Eminence of Baltimore, expressed his personal objection to the song as too nebulous to be worthily used at Christian funerals. The Sunday following, I had to answer a question as to whether I agreed with the Cardinal and I said, I did—with the result that I received all kinds of protests and demurrers.

But it isn't true that anybody has banned it and it doesn't help the sweetness of human relations to say they have. Even Cardinals have their personal preferences and antipathies and are, of course, quite at liberty to express them. Neither you nor I are asked to agree with them, though, on this occasion I do.

I think that compared with "Abide With Me" or "Nearer My God to Thee" or especially with, "The King of Love My Shepherd Is," "Beautiful Isle of Somewhere" is a piece of nebulous pap.

Can Repenting Sinners Reach a Saints' Heaven?

QUESTION: Does the sinner who has lived a vile life and who has broken most of the commandments succeed, by a late repentance, in reaching the same kind of Heaven and reap the same kind of reward as is reached and reaped by a good, pure character who has lived all his life as best he could?

ANSWER: My answer to that question is, "Yes," because Heaven is not a reward. It is the home of God's children, not

their reward. If they are home in time, from their swine-troughs, then they come to the feast. So long as we think of Heaven as reward of merit, we shall get rebellious against that state of things, but if we think of everybody as God thinks of them, as his children, some of them prodigal and some of them who have never left home but who, like the elder son in the parable are worse than if they had, then we shall get the right picture.

Read, as well as Luke 15, Matthew 20 where the story of the Laborers in the Vineyard is told. Read the story of the Thief on the Cross. Read what Jesus said about the gentiles, the publicans, and sinners crowding into the Kingdom in front of the church folk and you will see that this is unquestionably his teaching. And I guess that it is his teaching that is going to settle things—not our opinions.

You may say, Well, if so, why not have a journey into the far country? In reply to that possible question, let me ask you one, Why don't you have a debauching night in New York or Paris? Surely not because you are afraid of being found out but because it is always better to be true to the Father in Heaven or the wife on earth, apart altogether from the question of rewards and punishments. It's a question of moral cleanness and family pride—pride in the earthly or heavenly family to which we belong.

Water and the Spirit

QUESTION: What did Christ mean when he said to Nicodemus that a man must be born of water and of the spirit before he can enter into the kingdom of God? Where is the kingdom of God?

ANSWER: Taking your second question first, the plainest answer to that question is Christ's own answer in Luke 17 and

verses 20-21. "And being asked of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God cometh, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo, here! or, There! for lo, the kingdom of God is within you."

The kingdom of God is not Heaven. It is not some future state or place. All the Italians or Japanese, wherever they may be throughout the world, unless they have been naturalized in another country, are members of their native kingdom. Did not Mussolini say a few months ago that wherever a true Italian was, there was Italy—or something like that? Well, it is the like with the kingdom of God. It is wherever there is a heart that beats true to the purposes of God. Heaven is only the capital of that realm. It is here and not yonder. It is in every spirit-filled heart.

Now, Nicodemus wanted to know how all that happened. Christ referred him to the Jewish process of naturalization, by which a man left all his clothes on the bank of a stream and went into the stream to come out on the other side to find other clothes waiting for him. That was how Christian baptism had its origin. It was an act signifying an inner renunciation of self; a cutting off of the old self-centered life. Do that, says Christ, not so much the outward act as the inner act of self-renunciation; and the spirit of God will rush into the empty life as wind rushes into a vacuum. That is the simplest way I know of saying what Christ said so much more wonderfully than any of the rest of us can say it.

My Theology

QUESTION: Just what is meant by being saved? Is there not some better term than this to be used by evangelists and Christian workers in talking with sinners?

ANSWER: I don't like that word "sinners" either, as designating a class, or a group. The fact is that, to the average man, all our religious phraseologies are outworn but the difficulty is to discover new phraseologies which still retain eternal truth. To find new words is easy. To have them express the old abiding truths is tremendously hard.

"Sinners" in the New Testament for instance, almost always means "street-walkers." I should not like to say that the effect of that on our thought has been that we think only of outward and social sin when we think of sin at all. But it is a fact that we do too freely tag the socially virtuous folk as spiritually whole and the socially vicious folk as the only sinners; when, as a matter of fact, Jesus taught that the folk who were in danger of hell fire were those who were selfish with large professions of religion, who didn't give the cup of cold water and act kindly to their neighbors. He never taught that religion was a matter of belief. He always taught that religion was a matter of conduct—of unselfish and, if need be, sacrificial conduct.

I myself feel that the way to express it all in modern phraseology is to say that all sin is selfishness; selfishness against God in refusing to acknowledge, in our conduct, that our life is derived from him and is a stewardship for him; selfishness against men and nature in refusing to recognize that we all belong to the same family of living things and especially to the closer family of human things. Sin, so regarded, leads to every kind of separation; separation from God, the central source of life and love; and separation from man because it treats him or her as our prey instead of our comrade. And separation is death; what Herbert Spencer defined death as being; the inability of an organism to correspond with its environment; our environment being God on the one hand and man on the other hand.

The death of Christ, as I understand it, was his deliberate act of determination to live unto God and man and not unto himself. In that aspect, that death is the signpost to true life and selfless service. Those who follow him, accepting his leadership, are delivered from the bondage of death or selfish living into the liberty of the children of God.

That is my theology, so far as I can interpret it to myself at this time. That being the setting of the facts, it seems to follow that being saved is really being delivered from the death of self-seeking and self-aggrandizement. Salvation is life, life lived in unison with God and man. Moffatt frequently translates the word “savior” by the word champion or hero. That is what Christ is, the hero or champion of a new and selfless way of living. There is another Hebrew word for “save,” than the word which is often translated, “deliver.” It literally means, “to bring to life.” The New Testament nearly always means just that, “to bring to life” and that is what happens when Christ brings us to realize that life is from a great parent stem and root, that he himself is the stem of that universal vine—and that every part of life is a part of the one vine. If we sever ourselves from the universal purpose and refuse the life of universal service, we cut ourselves off from life.

Don't Change the Word “Catholic”

QUESTION: What do we mean when we use the word “Catholic” in the Creed? Do you think folk understand that expression? Don't you think it ought to be changed?

ANSWER: The word “Catholic” means “Universal.” I have many friends in the Roman Catholic Church, but I should not like to give my Roman Catholic friends the monopoly of

that word. When I say that I belong to and believe in the Holy Catholic Church, I like to think that it is a church bigger than the churches—a church that includes Roman Catholic and Lutheran and Greek Orthodox and Protestant and every kind of church.

I am just in the middle of reading Rupert Hughes' splendid life of George Washington. And I am right in the place where the regiment of Pennsylvania and the regiment of Maryland and the regiment of Virginia were so prone to quarrel about their particular regiments that they forgot they all belonged to a great army that was bigger than all of them put together. That is what I mean. I want to remember the army as well as the various regiments that make up the army.

It's like that with the army we all belong to. Some of it is on earth and some in Heaven; but I like to think of it as the one great army—and I do when I say in the Creed, "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church."

Was His Father a Christian?

QUESTION: Can one be considered a Christian who does not believe in what the Creed calls "everlasting life?"

ANSWER: That question is only part of a very delightful and fraternal letter which I wish I could read to you all. The writer says that he enjoyed the fullest and most free communion with his father as a boy and that they used to take long walks and have great talks together about everything in the world. That made me thank God that there were still men who had had fathers like that. Then, my friend says that his father seldom discussed everlasting life and conveyed the impression that he thought the probabilities were rather against it.

Well, if you are asking whether your father was a Christian in spite of all that, I fancy that, knowing him as you did, you are better able to be assured of his real Christianity than anything I could give you. If you mean that you are persuaded he was—or would be persuaded he was—if you could get that one point settled about him; all I have to say is that a Christian is one who follows Christ even in the darkness of his own doubts like Thomas.

Christianity is just Christ, being loyal to Christ without hope of life or reward or anything. I have a great love for Thomas and sometimes think he was the best of the lot when he said, knowing that Christ was going to Jerusalem and would be killed, "Let us also go that we may die with him." Thomas doesn't seem to have believed a thing but he did believe in the friend of his heart so well and so strongly that he thought it better to die with Christ than live without him; thought it better to be alone with him than in the crowd without him. That is Christianity, and what a man believes after that doesn't matter.

When was Anno Domini?

QUESTION: I have read somewhere that our calculation of Anno Domini is wrong by several years and that Jesus was born either several years before or after the date he was supposed to have been born. Do you know anything about this, and, if so, can you make it clear to me?

ANSWER: I do know something about that. It is interesting but not vital. So long as Jesus was born; so long as that blessed sun did rise, with healing in his wings, the exact hour of the sunrise now that he has arisen, is not vital.

But what a wonderful thing it is that the birth of this peasant of Galilee should be the watershed of history; that a baby born in a manger should have so affected the world that every date in history is either reckoned as being so many years before his birth or so many years after it. He is the Great Divide. From him, we reckon all the sources of all the streams of tendency that have affected the lives of men. So, we say, Julius Caesar was born 55 years before Christ and the Declaration of Independence was written 1776 years after Christ.

The significant thing is that it is all reckoned as being before or after the birth of this peasant girl's baby at Bethlehem—a place we should never have heard about but for that, and which belongs to a country that, but for him, would have no world significance today. That fact wants a lot of thinking about and a lot of explaining. Why is he the watershed of history? That wants thinking about. I myself, do not see how the conclusion can be avoided by any unprejudiced man—he happens to be the hardest man in the world to find—that that peasant girl's baby, was the very Incarnation of the Divine.

But about the date of his birth—here is the surprising thing: It was not fixed as the watershed of history until around the middle of the sixth century—around 550 A. D. (you see how easily we fall into that *Anno Domini* habit). An abbot named Dionysius Exiguus, at Rome, suggested in a Latin book called *Cyclus Paschalis*, that Christians should henceforth date everything from the birth of Christ. The idea received universal and immediate endorsement and was quickly adopted. Five hundred and fifty years after a relatively obscure event gives plenty of time for error in calculating that event with exactness. There was, undoubtedly, error in calculating the year of our Lord's birth—an error of several years. But how many years, nobody knows.

You will want to know how it is that if 550 years is long enough to create an error, 1927 years should not be too long to correct it. The answer to that is that during the past hundred years, at least, there has grown up what we ought to call a Science of History. Men wrote history before, but nowadays there is as much research into historical data as there is into disease. Old engraved stones, old letters and books, old buildings and graves—everything is being ransacked, almost microscopically examined and carefully checked, with astonishing results.

We are now able to correct errors centuries old and sometimes centuries wrong in historical questions. One of the greatest fields of exploration is that of the ancient laws and records of the Roman Empire, frequently found in the form of stones, monuments and buildings dated with the year of the Emperor or Governor. Thus, we come to know two things that are very important about the birth of our Lord. Already, we know that Jesus was born before the death of Herod. Now, from Roman sources, we know that Herod died in the spring of B. C. 4. So there is at least a four-year error in our ancient reckoning. But how long before the death of Herod was Jesus born? We know that he was born during a census of the Roman Empire undertaken by Quirinius (Luke tells us that). That census was timed for B. C. 8 and was undertaken in most provinces of the Roman Empire at that time. But there was a quarrel taking place between Herod and his two sons at that time which made the taking of the census impossible in that year. So, sometime between B. C. 8 and B. C. 4 Jesus was born.

Did Jesus Exist?

QUESTION: Have you any proof outside the Bible, that Christ ever lived on the earth?

ANSWER: Yes. Thousands! Here are a few of my thousands: (1) *The existence of the Christian Church*—Whatever its character or value, it is the largest and most universal institution in the world. It is bigger than Masonry or the Knights of Columbus or any other or all of the other institutions combined. Somebody started it. Who?

(2) *America*—China has more coal, more iron, more gold fields, more people, more ancient learning, more history, more everything worth while except Jesus. America hasn't very much of him but what she has is a dynamic accounting for our American civilization—or whatever we have in America that is worth calling civilized.

(3) *Home*—There weren't any homes, or children, or women before Jesus came. The women were playthings. The children were just potential men and women, just valued as such and not because of their childhood. Home was simply a shelter, not a place of tender, healing ministries.

(4) *The Martyrs*—There's no doubt about them. Gibbon will tell you more about them and the sources of our information concerning them than I have time for. Did they die for somebody who never existed?

(5) *Hospitals*—There wasn't one in the world till Jesus came.

(6) *Monogamy*—There wasn't any married chastity until Jesus came. Read Catherine Mayo's "Mother India," or Stanley Jones' "Christ of the Indian Road," if you want to know the difference that Christ makes. If he were not real, he wouldn't make a real difference like that to marriage.

(7) *Christian Experience*—There are multitudes of persons in the world today who are as sure of the existence of Jesus as they are of their own folks. He speaks to them, lives with them, helps them daily, hourly; these folk are the salt of the

earth. Where did they get their saltiness? I don't mean the peppery people: I mean the salty people.

Those are 7 of my reasons for knowing Christ really came. The other 993 reasons are just as important.

Does Christ's Divinity Matter?

QUESTION: Why, considering how liberal you are in other respects, do you insist on the Divinity of Jesus Christ?

ANSWER: There comes a point where liberalism must cease—a point of finality where a man must at last ground and anchor his faith. That point, for the Christian, is in the deity, not the mere divinity, of Jesus Christ. I say, the deity, because there are a lot of folk playing with language today and making divinity mean little, watering it down. I mean the *deity* of Jesus. I mean that he was God's only begotten Son, uniquely and distinctively God in the flesh.

I don't care personally about much else as being essential—certainly not whether you think the first chapter of Genesis is literal history or the last chapter of Revelation exact prophecy. But I cannot get along without my conviction of the absolute deity of Jesus—God in the flesh—as John and Paul conceived him to be.

If he was not that, and is thus able to come to our succor in all kinds of ways, then he set us an example impossible to follow. His death was just a martyrdom, and not even an inspiration, if the best man who ever lived died so defeatedly. The value of the Cross depends on the nature of him who died upon it. We were divorced from God. If he was divine, then, the divorce has been rescinded in him. Everything depends on that. It is the touchstone and the keystone. That is why I in-

sist on that to my own mind and urge it, without dogmatism, wherever and whenever I can.

The Basis of Prayer

QUESTION: To what extent have we the right to expect our prayers to be answered?

ANSWER: We have all the rights that children have in a home regulated by perfect love and perfect wisdom. I am glad you used the plural word "We" instead of the singular pronoun "I," because that is part of the clue to the difficulty. Three facts then emerge. The first is that we are children. The second is that the home we live in is governed by perfect wisdom and perfect love. The third is that we are children in a large family.

Commenting on the third fact first, I want to say that the family is large in every way; it is large in its numbers, of course, since it includes all life, human and otherwise. But it is large in its family existence, covering a multitude of millenniums of time. That is what I had in mind when I emphasized the fact that you had used the word "We" instead of the word "I." God cannot treat us as if we were isolated from the rest of life and from the rest of the human race.

Our individual desire is not the only consideration that must move him. He is thinking of the family as a whole and all the time—both as to its numbers and as to the extent of the family life through time. So, the prayer must always be, as Jesus taught us, in the terms, "Our Father"—not just "My Father." A very large part of the task of prayer—if I may so express it—is to bring us into that family consciousness with God and the rest of living things; to enable us to sink the purely indi-

vidual considerations in the will of the Father and the good of the family.

Returning to the first fact, that we are children, it is necessary to emphasize that, also. Being children there is so much we do not know. Our horizon is very limited. Our knowledge is very small. Viewed from the large, high, viewpoint, it is absurd to attempt to bring the mind of the Father down to the limited viewpoints of the child. Somebody pointed out, the other day, that we have no memory of extensive landscapes beyond and behind our eighth year. Childhood's physical views are limited. In very early childhood, they are limited to the under-side of tables and chairs. That is during the crawling period. We view everything from the floor level. And it is a long while before it becomes much better. You remember what Tom Hood said—

“I remember, I remember,
The fir trees, dark and high;
I used to think their flowery tops
Were close against the sky.”

That being the case, we need to commit the care of our life to somebody who lives at a higher level than we do—who has a wider perspective. That is why Jesus taught us to pray to “Our Father, who art in Heaven.” The word “Heaven”—as I think John Ruskin pointed out—is the perfect tense of the verb, to heave; to lift up. Christ emphasizes the fact that God gazes upon wider horizons and has larger perspectives. In the next sentence he emphasizes the fact that the will of that Father with the larger horizons as well as the large interests of the whole family at heart must be paramount. “Hallowed be Thy name” is not just a prayer that we may be kept from blasphemous speech. It is a prayer, surely, that God may be paramount in his family.

Those wide horizons of God, that wider perspective, include wider horizons of time. He sees what Tennyson calls,

“That one, far-off, divine event
To which the whole creation moves.”

And, incidentally, he sees the winding roads that lead to that event. There are temporary goods that lead to ultimate evil. As the Book of Proverbs says, “There is a way that seemeth right unto a man but the ends thereof are the ways of death.”

I referred to another consideration. It is that the family of which we are a part is governed by perfect wisdom, perfect love. We have to presuppose that; though we do not entirely have to presuppose that. We have some signs of it, visibly before us in our homes, in the love of friends, in the beauty of the earth, and the beauty of the sky and especially in the revelation which God has made of himself in the Book and in his son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

All these considerations weighing with us—the fact that we are part of a family that has interests that cover the whole of life, both in this generation and in all generations; that the Father’s viewpoint is so much wider than our own, guides our right to expect our prayers to be answered, just so far as we recognize those facts.

God will not bring himself down to our limited viewpoint. He will not sacrifice the family interests to those of the individual and he will not grant us temporary good that might prove an eternal evil. If you will say over to yourself the Lord’s prayer, with those factors in mind, you will see, I think, that it is the perfect expression of prayer for one who has those considerations in mind. The great object of prayer is not to bring God into unison with our thought and desire, but to bring us into line with the Father and the family.

Is a Prayer Answered?

QUESTION: What is God's most positive promise that prayer will be answered?

ANSWER: That is hard to say because it is a matter of individual opinion, there being so many promises. My own rule is to accept the statements of Jesus Christ as absolutely authoritative in the realm of the spiritual—on the basis that “The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath revealed him.”

Accepting that rule, the statements about prayer made by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount and contained in Matthew's Gospel, chapters six and seven, are authoritative; so is the 11th chapter of Luke, which is almost entirely devoted, also, to an amplification of what Matthew teaches.

There is a splendid little book by Harry Emerson Fosdick, just large enough for your inside pocket, entitled, “The Meaning of Prayer.” It is very small and very cheap, very modern and very devout.

Prayer and Incurable Disease

QUESTION: If a person is praying for the recovery of someone afflicted with what the doctors consider an incurable disease, what answer may one expect from such a prayer?

ANSWER: Well, that question gives a man some loopholes, if he wants to take them. What the doctors consider an incurable disease is not always incurable, though I have an immense respect for doctors. The best doctors will always admit of the possibility of error and the limitations of their knowledge. But that knowledge becomes less limited every year. Until the doctors' knowledge is absolute, I should always

feel that I were free to pray in such a case as you describe. But it is foolish and, I think, irreverent, to refuse the skill of the doctor. Their knowledge is part of God's revelation of himself, just as radio is part of his revelation; I mean, of course, the invention of the radio. God and a good doctor always work hand in hand and it is foolish to ignore either of them.

But there are no limits to what prayer can do, within the boundaries I have described. We should pray about everything, though always with the great proviso of Christ himself, "Thy will be done."

Invoking the Saints

QUESTION: What is your judgment about the practice of praying to the saints on the theory that we ourselves are too sinful to approach Christ direct?

ANSWER: I have said before through this microphone that I am not very much concerned about the method by which we pray, so long as we pray. Prayer is the radio of the spiritual realm. It is the means by which distance is eliminated between scattered souls; souls separated not only by physical distance but by differing viewpoints and mutual criticisms. It is the means by which all the child souls of the universal family are brought into contact, living, healing contact with the great Father Spirit of God—the source of all life, unity, love.

No question of procedure must prevent anybody anywhere from exercising that prerogative of all living souls. We cut ourselves and each other off from the greatest source of strength if, by our objection to some method or other of praying, we stop ourselves or others from praying.

But of course, for myself, I do not believe that praying through the saints is the highest form of prayer. That is not

criticism but testimony. I think that what we have to insist upon for the bringing of all men together is that none is outside of Christ, none too far gone or too deeply sunk, to cry to him. We are all his younger brethren and nothing that we can do, except blaspheming his divine sonship, can break the family connection. We have to insist on that.

Nobody is barred from direct approach to Christ by the fact of his sin. Nobody *was*. The thief on the cross—the woman taken in adultery, the woman by the well who had so paltered with her womanhood that nobody thought her fit to marry; the man who had so abused his body that he was now sick of a palsy; not one of these was too sinful, too burdened or unworthy to be cut off from direct access to Christ.

The great fact of his faith is that he is the same, yesterday, today and forever. He has not changed. So, we are choosing the lower, though we might have the higher contact, when we use some of his younger brethren, the saints, for approach. It is the same with communion with the dead. I think that such communion may be possible but I'm not very much interested because I know that whether I can have conversations with the servants of the Great House, or not, I can have conversations with the Master of the House himself. Why eat in the kitchen when it costs no more of money or labor to eat in the dining room? Why talk to the office boy when you might be talking with the principal of the firm? But I am not going to speak one word of condemnation of anybody who does not see it as I do. The big thing is to pray. The method is simply a secondary question.

“Lo, Here; Lo, There”

QUESTION: In the Lord's Prayer Jesus says, "Thy kingdom come." Later he says, "I go to prepare a

place for you.” In the latter passage, it looks as if the kingdom is somewhere else. In the Lord’s Prayer it looks as if it will be here. Where is the Kingdom?

ANSWER: The delightful thing about that very intelligent question is that it comes from a girl of thirteen which illustrates the fact that boys haven’t all the brains, and that men and women haven’t all the brains, either.

In the Lord’s Prayer, the word Kingdom might be better translated “reign.” In the fourteenth chapter of John the word place means mansion or resting place. There is nothing in either statement to oppose the other. It is just as if General Leonard Wood had said about the Philippines, “May the rule of America progress and spread here,” and as if also he had said, “When this very weary business of representing and working for America in the Philippines is over, I am preparing a country house in the Adirondacks to retire to.” Neither of those statements would be contradictory to the other.

The kingdom of God is going to be here, in the sense that the earth is going to be as heavenly one day as we hope the Philippines are going to be American. But, for all that, we shall want to go at last to where the king is; just as General Wood wanted to be, at last, where his friends are and the form of his friend, Roosevelt, lies sleeping.

Spiritual Toning

QUESTION: What does the Lord’s Prayer mean when it prays to God, “Lead us not into temptation?”

ANSWER: You should read in connection with this the first verse of the fourth chapter of Matthew’s Gospel. Here it is, “Then,” (immediately following the wonderful experi-

ence of the Baptism in Jordan) "then was Jesus lead up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil."

The Spirit led him into temptation. Nor is it impossible to see why. The Baptism was a great approval, by the Father, of the years of preparation. The ship has passed inspection, so to say, at the hands of the owner. But now, it has to show how it can withstand a storm. So it is headed right into the gale.

You remember also the first chapter of Job where God, as if proud of his servant, says to Satan, "Hast thou considered my servant Job?" As if God said, There is a man for you to blunt your teeth upon. I defy you to find a flaw in him.

That kind of thing may be happening behind the scenes of our own life. We may be quite sure that God will never leave us in the midst of a test that he himself has permitted. There need be no alarm at that thought. But, on the other hand, there ought to be nothing of the spirit of venturesomeness or bravado. We should be modest and self-distrustful and should evidence this in our prayers.

Peter said, "Though all should forsake thee, yet would I never forsake thee." That was braggart and boastful. Yet, Jesus told him that was not the spirit and that, before the cock crew, he would be denied by Peter thrice. There are your clues for fuller and closer thought.

Personal Help from Prayer

QUESTION: Do you get personal help through prayer? If so, does it come from without in; or does it come from within, out?

ANSWER: That's a finely stated question. I am delighted to receive such questions because they indicate deep

and real thought. Here is my answer about myself. I do get help from prayer. I get it in various ways. I get it by the fact that prayer enables me to attune myself to the divine will and purpose. My greatest psychological necessity is to get rid of strain and the danger of being hag-ridden by one idea or one impulse. Whenever that happens, I know I am not likely to think normally. Thought under strain is never sound thought. Now prayer enables me to relax my mind, enables me to get other angles of thought, and takes the passion out of my thinking, which is my own chief danger.

Now, you ask for my explanation of that. I don't think my explanation is nearly so important as my experience, and my explanation may be a wrong explanation of an undoubted fact—just as the fact of the movement of the solar system was known to be a fact even when the ancients thought the sun went round the earth instead of the earth going round the sun. The experience was right, but the explanation of the fact was wrong.

But my explanation of the fact that prayer helps me is, first, that I believe that prayer can change the methods of God. The materialism with which we are surrounded and—I think—impregnated today does not like that and says that the purposes of God are age-long and unalterable. But I refuse to believe that God is rendered impotent by the laws which he has himself created. And in all spiritual matters, matters concerning what God will do and what influences affect him, I have come to accept Jesus as the supreme and unquestionable authority. The only-begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father knows more about that Father than the sublimest philosopher in the largest university. And Jesus said that prayer could modify the purposes of God. The 11th chapter of Luke is final on that point.

But, of course, it is much more important that I should be brought to see things from God's viewpoint than that he

should be got to see things from my viewpoint. And that is surely the big thing about prayer. It brings us into touch with God and so brings us nearer to the place where God is. The view of the world we obtain from Calvary is very different from the view we obtain from some other hill, say San Juan, Cuba, or Bunker Hill.

So, I think that the answer to your question as to whether the help comes from within out, or from without in, is that the help is of both kinds.

Prayer and Paralysis

QUESTION: I had a stroke over three years ago; have prayed with my husband and friends ever since but haven't been healed yet. Is it right to keep on asking for this healing?

ANSWER: I have already written my answer to this poor, afflicted lady, whose anxiety to know what is the right thing to do must be so real. She is paralyzed. Normally, there is little hope for radical cure of paralysis; and there is distinct danger in anxiety, even concerning the anxiety to get well. The normal thing required in such a case is to seek a quiet mind, a tranquil spirit. There is wonderful healing power for the body in that. I suspect that nine out of every ten cases of mental healing are the direct result of the therapeutic effect of quietness of spirit.

I have written that to my afflicted friend, but I have written more. I have suggested that she allow her mind to be blessed by the knowledge of her husband's devotion and the warm and prayerful friendship of her friends. There is abundant cause for rejoicing in that. Let us praise God for the blessings that we have. That spirit of praise has also its therapeutic value. Ask your doctor.

About praying to get well. You cannot pray too much, even if the prayer is not going to be answered in the exact way you wish. Let me suggest that you read two New Testament passages. The first of them is from the Sermon on the Mount, about praying for bread and *not* getting a stone. That is Matthew, chapter 7, verses 7 to 12. God always answers our prayers somehow and the "somehow" is always good. But the passage I especially want you to read is the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, the 12th chapter, and from the first to the twelfth verses.

That story tells how Paul had a thorn in the flesh, as he called it. Some have thought it was blindness. Others have thought it was a form of epilepsy. Whatever it was, it was a thorn in the flesh. Paul says he prayed to the Lord thrice that he would take it away and that, at last, God answered him, saying, "My Grace is sufficient for thee." Think about that a great deal.

Think about it prayerfully because I believe that by prayer, God will open its deep meanings to greater depths than I can expect to reach. But I believe that Paul ceased from praying that the thorn in the flesh might be removed and began to pray, instead, that God's grace might become more and more sufficient for him. There is a precious book by Basil King called "The Conquest of Fear," which you should get your friends to read to you as they can.

Trespases or Debts?

QUESTION: Which translation do you prefer, "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors" or, "Forgive us our trespases as we forgive those that trespass against us?" Why?

ANSWER: I like the "debts" translation best because I think it is what Jesus meant. The Greek word translated "trespass" and "debt" is pronounced "amartia." It is used everywhere to express the idea of crossing a line which we ought to have walked along—and not across. But I think that the use to which the word was put is a little more definite than that, though that opens up a big question of scholarship.

But, anyhow, I'm sure of this, that Jesus meant to include the forgiving of debts by Christian people when he spoke of trespasses being forgiven. I mean, literal money debts. If you doubt that, read the fifth chapter of Matthew, the 38th to the 42nd verses. I know that sounds hard but I think Jesus meant that we are not to sue for debt, if we are Christians. Of course, on the other hand, a man cannot be a Christian if he does not try, hard and determinedly, to pay his debts.

The Salvation Army

QUESTION: What do you think of the Salvation Army?

ANSWER: My admiration for the Salvation Army is almost unbounded. I was brought up in far-off England as a Methodist of the fourth generation but am glad that, from my early years, my parents were interested in and sympathetic with the Salvation Army and some of my earliest memories are associated with its officers.

The fine thing about the Salvation Army is that it has preserved a sane evangelism when the danger of what I may call concentrated evangelism is that it may become hysterical. The Salvation Army has been saved from that very destructive thing by the fine social service with which its evangelism has always been allied, by keeping its feet on the ground.

The Salvation Army was one of the few religious institutions that came out of the World War with an enhanced reputation. I was in England at that time and know what the British Tommy thought of its fine sacrificial service. Since coming to America, I have been delighted to find that exactly the same fine estimate was made by the American soldiers. God bless the Salvation Army.

Does the Bible Talk About Everlasting Life?

QUESTION: What is the difference between "everlasting life" and "eternal life?"

ANSWER: Jesus never talked about everlasting life. He only talked about eternal life. Everlasting life is just what it says—everlasting, and, if that is its only feature, worthless. Nothing could be so terrible, to my thought, than life that went on for ever without a large content. The term "everlasting life" is simply a bad English translation, the old translators mistaking quantity for quality—a thing that quite a number of very modern persons do, in other matters.

"Eternal life" is not, of necessity, everlasting, though, if it is of the right quality, it must be that. The emphasis that Jesus put upon whatever idea the men of his time had concerning immortality was upon the quality and content of the life that was to continue. "This is life eternal, that they should know thee and him whom thou hast sent" (John XVII. 3). He defined his mission in John X. 10. "The thief cometh not but that he may steal and kill and destroy. I am come that they may have life and may have it abundantly."

Eternal life does not begin beyond the tomb. It begins just as soon as, placing our life in the hands of Christ, we allow

him to fill it with a new meaning and to endow it with a new Godward relationship which makes it invulnerable to the effects of death. It goes right on, through the tomb, untouched, except with a greater meaning and glory.

That is where Jesus showed himself to be in such splendid contrast with the Greek thought of his time—a thought that ran through the civilized world. The Greeks taught that if men did live on—they were not very sure about it—they would live on as what they themselves called “attenuated shades”—thin wisps of men. Jesus said not. Rather would the new life, being filled with God, be filled with glory, power—everything virile and good.

A Point Where Thought Goes Wrong

QUESTION: What is the difference between inspiration and revelation? What I mean is: we speak of the Scriptures being the revealed word of God and we speak of them as being the inspired word of God. Do these expressions mean the same thing?

ANSWER: They do not. It is because we are prone to think they do, that we get into trouble in our thinking about the Bible. The difference between them is the difference between the broadcasting station and your receiving set. Revelation is the sending out of the word of God from the Throne of God or the Heart of God. The degree and amount of truth varies just as the program sent out from the broadcasting station varies. I mean that the amount of truth sent out from himself by God to the writer of the Book of Genesis was not the same as the amount sent out to Paul, for instance. Revelation concerns the amount of truth sent out. It concerns, so to speak, the broadcasting end

But inspiration concerns the receiving end. If there is no receiving end, there may be all the revelation that God himself could give but it would be in vain, just as it would be in vain for the broadcasting station—so far as you are concerned—to send out air waves unless you have a receiving set. So that, just as men may have different power-receiving sets, so they may have differing degrees of inspiration.

The writer of Genesis may have been just as greatly inspired as Paul; sufficiently inspired to pick up every syllable of revelation from God's heart. But the revelation was not there.

A Female Atheist

QUESTION: I am a woman. I do not believe in God. I have had no tragedy in my life to drive me from faith. By intellectual means alone, I have just come to the conclusion that a personal God does not exist. What have you to say to me?

ANSWER: There are three things I should like to say to you, Madam, in the hearing of these folk who are listening to me. The first is that I don't believe you. That sounds rude. It may be—but it is not quite so rude as it sounds. I mean that while I believe that you think you have come to that conclusion about exiling God from his universe, you are deceiving yourself if you think you are disbelieving because of intellectual reasons. I have met many men who called themselves atheists. I have never met a woman atheist. I don't believe they exist. I absolutely refuse to believe that you have become an atheist solely for intellectual reasons. I think that if I knew some more facts about you, how old you are, whether married or single, whether sick or well, happy or unhappy—then I could do some guessing.

You are an intellectual woman. Then, you know that there is nothing more rare than pure intellectualism. Emotion creeps in—even when we are unaware of it. Sex creeps in, if we are to adopt the findings of Professor Freud—all kinds of inhibitions and complexes arising from sex, from sickness and from other influences. There is no such thing as a purely intellectual reason.

Atheism in a woman is the crowning treachery against Jesus Christ. He, and nobody else in history, is the originator of the emancipation of woman. He became that, because he was the Son of God. If God had no Son, then he does not exist. The modern woman has no basis for her claims, and no reason for her emancipation, apart from Jesus Christ, God's Son. That sounds arrant nonsense. It is sober intellectual fact.

You ought to read the Literary Review of the Chicago Evening Post to get my viewpoint. Here is what Susan Wilbur said in a review of Gertrude Atherton's latest book. She is speaking of the days of Pericles, in Athens, just about 500 years before Jesus Christ. "It was a day when to marry for love was unknown in Athens, and to love one's wife, even after marriage, somewhat disreputable. Athens was a man's world, and woman was to be seen, neither on the streets nor yet in her home should her husband be giving a banquet. If your wife proved troublesome, you simply sent her back to her spinning wheel, or divorced her, refunding her dowry, of course, but keeping the children." That is a true and not overdrawn picture. Indeed, matters were much worse than that and impossible to describe. And that was in the days of Pericles, the highest, richest days of the greatest and most enlightened pagan nation the world has ever seen, as every intellectual woman knows. To get a picture of woman's world in pagan times, you must go to some highly civilized pagan land of today, like China.

It was Jesus Christ—Christ who was Mary's son, and the friend of Mary Magdalene, who enshrined womanhood in our hearts as something sacred for its own wonderful, sacrificial and uplifting sake. Immediately the Christian story reaches any country and immediately the Christian impulse gets into the hearts of the men of that country, the first change is in the status of woman. That is taking place in China right now—as in India. Jesus is the cause of the enfranchisement of woman in every century and in every country. To deny the existence of His Father is the crowning act of treachery by woman against Jesus Christ.

Atheism is the most dreadful foe of womanhood. Let atheism among men or women grow and there won't be much left of the modern and I suppose precious freedom of woman. Chastity will disappear from the earth. Our respect for woman will die like the flowers before the frost's first onslaught. You know what Paul said, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die." There won't be any reason for cleanness, chastity, reverence of womanhood, if God goes and takes "tomorrow" with him. I mean that if God goes, immortality goes, too, and the great big reason for being pure and being good is gone with it. Irreligious days are always profligate days and profligate days are always terrible for woman.

Faith Is Dynamic

QUESTION: Do you think there is any virtue or value in believing apart from its object? I mean would it still be worth while to believe, even if there were some doubt about the object of belief—say, the existence of God?

ANSWER: I certainly do. Robert Browning, in his wonderful but difficult poem, "Bishop Blougram's Apology," says

that faith is always fire and doubt is always ice. That may not be the exact wording of it, but it is the sense of what he says and the sense is very sensible.

If I give you aviation as an instance, you will be able to apply the illustration to everything else. H. G. Wells published a book just after the war in which he pointed out that as recently as 1913, the scientific people—always supposed to be infallible—seriously discussed whether men would be able to fly—as soon before the war as 1913. Well, there were a few fools around them who refused to be convinced by these scientific skeptics. Some of them broke their necks and others their bank accounts. But it is to these fanatical believers that we owe the probability of being able to visit England before I am dead, within two sunsets. We certainly do not owe it to the skeptics. Fancy a man flying in those first machines who was certain that the blessed thing would never leave the ground and, if it did, it would never come down again. It was the believer, before there was much to believe in, who just made the wheels go round, as your own thinking over the history of inventions, and of progress, will tell you.

Then, Browning goes on to say that belief is always constructive and disbelief always destructive. Apart altogether from the religious question, St. Francis or Luther did more for the energizing of civilization than, for instance, Voltaire or Renan. Faith itself, apart from its object, is a wonderful dynamic for civilization. Any fool can push a wall down. It takes activity and long continued energy to put a wall up. That is apart altogether from direct goal and object of faith which, as I understand, you wished me to ignore for the purposes of this question.

Just as I had finished preparing my answer to that question, I read a fine quotation in an English newspaper. Let me read it to you:

“We can always retain our beliefs so long as we retain our feeling. This is the touchstone of belief. Those who feel strongly, believe. Lose your feelings and you become, as the phrase is, disillusioned. Then comes the gray desolation, the emptiness, the arid, meaningless vacuity which is the tragedy that accompanies all disbelief. It is the ignoble surrender to death in life.”

Creed or Christ?

QUESTION: Do you think a man has to believe all that the Creed says in order to be a good Christian?

ANSWER: I do not. I think that a man has to believe in Jesus Christ—not in the Creed—in order to be a Christian. But even that simple statement needs qualifying because the word “belief” means so many different things to different minds.

For instance, a man may say, “I believe in my wife” and mean a very different thing from when he says, “I believe in God.” All that he may mean by believing in God is that he believes that God exists. But he does not only mean that he believes that his wife exists when he says that he believes in his wife. He believes in his wife’s trustworthiness and in her devotion.

Now, I think that it is that kind of belief that Jesus wants and I believe that if a man has that kind of belief—the kind that believes that Jesus is absolutely devoted to him, is absolutely worthy of his confidence—the other kind of belief in the things that the Creed says about Jesus will come.

I am sure that once we come to believe that Jesus is worth believing in for his own sake, we shall come to find that the rest of the teaching of the Creed about him will be proven to be true.

Is the Bible Infallible?

QUESTION: Would not our religious world be relieved of a dead load if we could, in some way, or other, get rid of the idea that the Bible is the infallible word of God?

ANSWER: I am going to give time to this question because it is one of the really practical kind, expressed in a lengthy letter very ably and clearly, and probably articulating the thoughts of many thousands besides the asker of it. Let me, first of all, read some of the letter, which runs to seven pages, though not to a page too many. Here are the extracts:

“There is a real problem for that increasing multitude of us who are unable to conform our intellectual content with that which the church prescribes, and which many Christian people seem to easily accept. To be happily environed ecclesiastically, one’s spiritual and intellectual life should function freely, openly and concurrently. Both spiritual and mental life should have ample freedom of self-expression. The church and perhaps other organized institutions—but the church particularly—repress the intellect. In the realm of science, discovery and invention, there doesn’t seem to be any desire to impose inhibitions upon intellectual ventures, but in religion, the church, in most instances, virtually fixes the type of one’s thinking, the content of the religious mind.

“On this ground, I have, most of my life, found myself unable to enjoy, fully, my church life. This problem, to me a serious one, has its base in a fallacy. This fallacy consists of the ideal held for many centuries that the Bible is the inspired, unerring word of God. The doctrine of inspiration and infallibility has made the Bible into something that it is not. Would it not make us a happier religious world if we were

allowed to accept and interpret the Bible on the basis of what it really is, a collection of ancient religious literature, a product of the mentality current in that old world? In this literature, they recorded their beliefs, their superstitions, their inspirations and aspirations, their joys and sorrows, their failures and successes, their faith in God and hopes for the future.

“For my own part, when I read the Bible, I do it without putting my intellect through the torture and into inconvenient attitudes. I read the Bible more appreciatively and understandingly, even as a mere layman, than I ever could during the early years when I struggled with the old idea of inspiration and infallibility.”

My friend, in his thinking, does not discriminate sufficiently between the churches and the church. Individual churches are not the church, which is the great body of Christian people. Now, the church has never defined a doctrine of inspiration. I want to insist upon that. It has never said, “This is what we understand by inspiration, and this is not inspiration.” That of course, includes Scriptural infallibility. That being the case, it is wrong to say that the church has, generally or officially, dogmatized about the matter at all. Individual Christians have. So have groups of Christians. But the church as a whole never has. That is important. It is as important as blaming a whole school for the foolish or criminal act of one pupil, or even of one master. But the church has insisted that the Bible is the inspired word of God, even if it has not defined how it is so.

My friend admits, for my purpose and to my thinking, at least, that the Bible is inspired. Else why does he read it? Not merely because it is the collection of ancient records that he speaks of it as being. The Hindu Vedas, the Upanishads of India, are also available. They are quite as ancient, are quite as much records of ancient faiths of by-gone ages. There must

be another reason, which my friend would, I am sure, be willing to gladly admit. There is something in this book that is not to be found in other books to the same degree. It answers *some* longing, *some* hunger. That, to me, is inspiration. Samuel Taylor Coleridge expressed it when he said, "The Bible finds me." It gets down below the veneers in which I cover myself, shows me as myself, and that is what I mean by inspiration. When Oliver Cromwell had his portrait painted by Sir Peter Lely, he said, "Warts and all, Lely,—warts and all." That is the kind of portrait that the Bible shows me of myself. That is inspiration.

But my friend will admit something else. The Old Testament, in particular, is, as he says, chiefly a collection of ancient records. But they are records of struggle of all kinds. Generally, it is an ineffective struggle, until toward its end, it begins to speak as if the unaided struggle were too much, as if somebody must come and rescue the battle from the enemy if it is to be won. Then, there begins to emerge a hope that such a rescuer will come. It becomes a promise.

Now, I ask my friend to consider this: it was not the Christian Church that made the selection of the books of the Old Testament, containing these stories of struggle against the lower man within us, nor the Christian Church that selected these promises of this coming rescuer from the mass of other similar literature that lay around. If *we* had compiled the canon of the Old Testament, the charge would have been made that we had selected only such books for that Testament as suited our purpose. The significance of that ought to be clear. There must, surely, have been some presiding and beneficent mind guiding these things. That is what we mean by inspiration, not as a doctrine but as an obvious fact of history.

Now, we come to the New Testament. What is the significant thing about it? Surely, it is this, that it contains a unique

portrait—a portrait that has never been excelled for beauty or winsomeness. Men *do* fall in love with that portrait. That is unquestionable. My friend has, though he does not say so; and the striking thing is that whenever men fall in love with it, they are better men. Now, what is inspiration, anyway? Surely, in some sense, that need not be defined. I, for one, refuse to define it lest I be accused of trying to narrow something that is as broad as God's Heaven. Surely, inspiration, whatever else it is or is not, is an inrush of the divine into this human life of ours; a beam shooting through our thunder clouds. If it is anyhow possible for God to do this, it is everyhow possible for him to do this.

Inspiration includes the incarnation of Jesus Christ, our Lord. And wherever he goes, wherever that portrait is shown, there is apparent a difference in men and in their reactions to the facts of life. My friend refers in one part of his letter to the outworn stories of demon possession. But why are they outworn? Dr. Glover of Cambridge, England, has written some wonderful books which would delight my friend for their liberalness. In one of them, Dr. Glover points out that wherever Christ was known, in the first ages of the church, the fear of demons disappeared. That is still true. The pagan world today is still hag-ridden and terrified by the fear of demons. Where Jesus is known, that fear disappears. That being the case, and it seems indisputable—I don't care what is the explanation of the story of the Gadarene swine. That is trivial, compared with the total effect of Jesus on the world-fear of demons. That is the big thing.

Why God Created the World

QUESTION: What was God's purpose in creating the world?

ANSWER: That is not an easy question and I may not be able to shed any light on it at all. I do not know how much is in my questioner's mind as he asks it and what, particularly, he is groping after. But the old definitions of God made the creation of the world unnecessary. That is to say, if God is infinite in every sense, then he is self-sufficient and needed nothing besides himself.

But, as I said last Sunday, I am sure that we shall get a different viewpoint of God if we go to Jesus Christ for our definitions. He was content to give just one definition and it has a very close bearing on your question. He said that God is Father just as the man who knew Christ best said that God is love.

A father must have a child. A lover must have a beloved. The world is the answer of God, the lover, to his own need of something responsive to his need for love. Such a God as Christ revealed could not live in a vacuum, so to speak, and continue to be God.

That is the big part of the answer. Another part of it is this. Life is not static. It is dynamic. It is active, creative, operative. It has to do something to prove it is alive and to prove that to itself. God is alive and the very essence of life. That being so, he had to be creative.

So, if you like, the creation of the world is an answer to his own twofold craving. It answers the dynamic craving of his nature to do something. And it answers the craving of his heart for an object of his love.

Is Capital Punishment Christian?

QUESTION: Does the teaching of the New Testament support capital punishment of whatever kind?

ANSWER: I can see myself getting into trouble with some of these questions, but I am bound to answer honestly that the Sermon on the Mount is contrary to the teaching that capital punishment implies. Capital punishment is an outcropping of the teaching of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. The Sermon on the Mount abrogates that.

But before you treat that as a final and conclusive answer, you have to decide something much more important. Did Jesus, in the Sermon on the Mount, lay down a new principle for human society or did he simply give a new order to his own disciples, living in human society? The German scholar Weisaker says that it was the latter, and not the former, but, of course, there is ground for a lot of discussion there. Personally, I should not be able to vote for any form of capital punishment, thinking that it would be a personal violation by me of the teaching of Jesus for me. But every man must settle that for himself.

When Did They Begin To Write the New Testament?

QUESTION: How and by whom was Christianity carried down from the time of Christ until the Bible was written?

ANSWER: Jesus was crucified somewhere between A. D. 30 and A. D. 35. Scholars are agreed that the Gospel of Mark was written not later than A. D. 66, while St. Paul was yet alive, as the Alexandrine Fathers say. Peter died before Paul. Thus Mark and, I think, Luke, all Paul's Epistles, and James' Epistle were written within thirty-three years of the ascension of Jesus Christ. Many of the books were written before that, so that the whole of the New Testament was

written either by Apostles or what are called Apostolic men, men like Timothy and Mark, the companions of the Apostles.

Your question seems to suggest that you thought there was a long interval between the death of Christ and the beginning of the New Testament. There was no such interval. Perhaps the Epistles to the Thessalonians were written within fifteen years of that death. The church was carried on by the Apostles themselves and before the last of them died, the whole, or most of the New Testament was written.

The last writer to die was St. John, who wrote the Gospel, the three epistles and, perhaps, the Revelation. He had a disciple named Polycarp. We know that he was young when John died and that Polycarp died in A. D. 146. That makes the interval between the completion of the New Testament and the death of Christ very short.

I believe there were fragments of the words of Jesus in existence in the early church within five years of the Ascension, and perhaps earlier than that. Some of them, called the Logia, are incorporated in St. Matthew's Gospel. So there was practically no interval between the Ascension and the first committal of the words of Jesus to writing.

An Unfaithful Wife

QUESTION: I have discovered my wife to be unfaithful to me. I have been a listener to you for many months and have learned to trust your advice. Tell me what I ought to do with her. Whatever it is, I will try to do it.

ANSWER: It is a very great privilege but a very dreadful responsibility to answer a question like that. If, as I understand to be the case, this is the first time you have had reason

to think your wife has failed you, then I am sure you have to forgive her. You tell me that you are a Christian man. It is your very plain but very difficult Christian duty to do that.

But something must be done as a mere matter of prudence. You have to tell your wife that you know she has been disloyal. There is not to be any bullying or raving and it would be better if she could somehow be persuaded to tell you of her own accord. It would be less humiliating to her and much less likely to cause her a feeling of subsequent anger against herself or you, if she could do this.

But that you will have to work out for yourself. What I am insisting on is the absolute necessity for your own soul's sake that you forgive her. There are all sorts of facts to make it easier for you to do this most difficult thing. One is the strange and treacherous nature of our own being. Sex is among the most inexplicable things in the world, with strange, underground passages leading to all kinds of dark and difficult places. In ways that I cannot point out to you here, you may yourself be innocently to blame for her failing to some extent. In your own heart, you may find some extenuating circumstances for her. I do not know.

But the great big reason for forgiveness is that God forgives us worse faults than adultery. There is help, somewhere in the Bible, for every circumstance. It happens that there is exactly the help you need in the first three chapters of the prophet Hosea. He married a wife who was unfaithful to him. He spoke to God about it and God told him to woo her back again, making quite sure that he won her heart all over again. Then, he was to take her back.

He did that, and when he had done it, God told him that what had happened between his wife and himself was exactly what was happening between God's people and their God. They were adulterously seeking other interests than his. They

were going back on him who had loved them with an everlasting love. It's all in the first three or four chapters of Hosea and I beg you to read it for your help and strength in this dark hour.

Pre-nuptial Unchastity

QUESTION: There is a man who wants to marry me. He thinks me altogether chaste and good, but this has not always been so. The other man is dead. Do you think I ought to tell my future husband of my past?

ANSWER: No, I do not, in the circumstances you have named. If the other man had been alive I think I should have given different advice. But even then, I am not sure. Our human nature is strangely constituted and while we can perform exalted acts of forgiveness in exalted moments, sometimes, when some cloud comes across our sky, we almost repent our own forgiving spirit, and sometimes even hark back to the magnanimity that we showed in our more generous mood, and destroy the effect of our magnanimity by referring to it.

If you have been entirely faithful to your fiancé, who you say you love very dearly, say nothing. Give him the future, utterly and entirely. The past does not belong to him. Some will criticize this advice of mine but it is the best I have to give you in this practical world. Stick to it.

Don't!

QUESTION: The gentleman to whom I am engaged to be married is a member of a church whose name I have given you in the accompanying letter. He

insists that I accompany him to his church when married. We have rather fussing discussions about this and I am a little concerned for the future. Will you kindly give me your advice?

ANSWER: My advice is, Don't marry him. I'm sure a marriage begun in the spirit you describe will end in a spirit of much greater controversy. If you both fail to love each other enough for either of you to be willing to join the other's church, you should not marry. There is a saying in the New Testament which goes like this, "If they do these things in the green leaf, what will they do in the dry?" And if you two folk are arguing about who is to do the surrendering now, when the glamour is at its greatest, what will your arguments be like when the routine of life begins to get you?

If nothing will content him but that you go to his church, he isn't worth marrying. If nothing will content you but he must go to yours, I'm not sure that you are any better than he is. Anyhow, argument that fusses you both is too bad a beginning to let me prophesy a good end to it.

Did a Woman Write the Epistle to the Hebrews?

QUESTION: *On what do you base your thought that the Epistle to the Hebrews was not written by Saint Paul? I heard you state this as your opinion but you did not give your reasons?*

ANSWER: I had given my reasons a few Sundays previously. Let me give them again. (1) Nowhere in the epistle is Paul or anybody else stated to be the writer. That leaves the question open for free conjecture and discussion.

(2) The epistle speaks of Timothy our brother. "Our brother!" Everywhere else in epistles that are undoubtedly Paul's, he is either spoken of as "our fellow helper" or as "my son." That looks as if the writer belongs to a rank secondary to the Apostles, if I may put it like that, rather than to the Apostolic group.

(3) More important and more impressive to anybody who reads a solitary chapter of the epistle, even in the English, is a very notable difference in literary style. Paul is argumentative, but severely logical, wherever logic will serve him. The epistle to the Hebrews, on the other hand is intuitive, almost poetical. That is why Harnack suggests that it was written by a woman, probably by Priscilla, the wife of Aquilla, the couple who taught Apollus, that man in Corinth who was so mighty in the Scriptures—meaning, the Old Testament Scriptures. That brings me to

(4) Which notes another surprising difference between the style of Hebrews and Paul's writings. I mean that Hebrews never ceases from quoting the Old Testament. You find the quotations, not on every page merely, but in every column. They are always quotations from the Greek translation of the Old Testament, known as the Septuagint, which indicates that it was a Greek Jew who used them; another indication that either Priscilla, Aquilla or Apollos or somebody of that Greek speaking circle, were the writers or writer. Each of these has been suggested as the author.

(5) Most impressive is the vocabulary. Paul had his own vocabulary, just as every man has. It was so distinctive that a Greek New Testament scholar, without knowing from what he was reading, would recognize Paul's style just as an English scholar would recognize Stevenson's style or Hardy's. Now, apart from hundreds of different sentence forms that Hebrews

use, there are 169 words in Hebrews that Paul never uses at all—not once in all his epistles. That seems conclusive.

You can get a very full and delightfully interesting treatise on the whole subject from Bishop Westcott's introduction to his commentary on the epistle. The "Britannica" will also have an article on it that is sure to be authoritative, though it is a long while since I read it.

Who Are the 144,000?

QUESTION: Who are the 144,000 redeemed from amongst men?

ANSWER: The reference is to Revelation, chapter VII and verse 4 and to chapter XIV and verses 1 and 3. The number is purely allegorical. It certainly does not mean that that is the total number of the redeemed. Else the chapter VII containing that glorious passage about the great company that no man could number which comforts us so much in our bereavement—that passage would contradict it.

The Jews—of whom St. John, author of the Book of the Revelation was one—were very fond of allegory. The persecuting time in which he lived made it necessary for him sometimes to use secret symbols and ciphers. I think that the number 144,000 is one of those mystic symbols of which we have lost the key. Dr. Swete, the greatest expositor of the Book of the Revelation, thinks that the number refers to the selected representatives of the twelve tribes of Israel—12 times 12,000.

But I'm sure we do ourselves and Jesus Christ a great wrong if we limit the number of the redeemed to that figure. If we limit him in any way, we get like the old Scotch woman who was asked by her minister who she thought would finally reach

Heaven. She said, "Weel, there'll be me"—she was quite sure about that, for she repeated it. "There'll be me"—and then not quite so positively, "There'll be my husband, John." "Nay, nay," she said presently, "I wouldn't be say sure about John." Let's keep the number of the redeemed as large as we can.

Teach Sex Facts Early

QUESTION: At what age should the teaching of sex be begun and how completely should its facts be explained to the youth of our homes?

ANSWER: The teaching of sex should begin when a child is aged two or sooner; to the extent of getting that child to admire the hatching and care of eggs by the mother bird; later, coming to the beauty and biological use of flowers.

How soon the facts of sex as they relate to our human life should be taught must be left to each individual parent but I am sure that the average parent is mistaken in thinking that boys and girls have not picked up a lot of very slimy knowledge before they are twelve.

All the facts of sex should be taught to a boy or girl by the sixteenth year, probably much before then. I cannot say that strongly enough. After thirty years of ministry, some of them very closely connected indeed with the wrecks and ruins of our young manhood and womanhood, I have the utmost confidence in saying that more have been ruined by a kind of half-knowledge—just having had a part of the story told them, until they think they know it all—than by knowledge of the completest sort. I would tell everybody everything—everything. It's the only safe course. The difficulty is that parents think they have told everything when they have only stammered and stuttered their way through a jargon of

suggestions, assuming that they have conveyed more than they really have.

That raises the very difficult question of who should do the telling. You have to be on mighty good terms with a boy or girl to do it properly; on better—or, at any rate, on closer—terms than the average parent is nowadays. And whoever does it must be quite sure that what they tell are facts and not just imagined facts.

Prohibition

QUESTION: There is much discussion regarding the stand one should take on the Prohibition question. By the time everybody has given his opinion, I do not know what to think. Will you tell me what should be the attitude of the intelligent young American on Prohibition?

ANSWER: What you call Prohibition happens to be a Federal law. It is a fundamental principle of civilized government that laws should be kept, whatever they are. If we pick and choose amongst laws, there is an end of civilization. According to William Roscoe Thayer, this question was put to Theodore Roosevelt about something else and Roosevelt answered, "Keep the law. Enforce the law. If it's a good law, it ought to be enforced, anyway. If it's a bad law, its enforcement will reveal its badness more quickly than anything else." I stand by Theodore Roosevelt.

Prohibition is an experiment, not a very successful one thus far, but good in its intention and purpose. The experiment will not be tested by ignoring it. Whatever young Americans should or should not stand for, it is their plain duty to their country to enforce the laws of their country. At the same

time they should reserve to themselves the right, which belongs to every free-born man, to legitimately work for the repeal of any law which they believe works hardships or injustice on any considerable proportion of the people.

Should the Church Be Responsible for Community Amusements?

QUESTION: Do you think that the Church should be responsible for all community amusements?

ANSWER: My own opinion, for what it is worth is, No. The church has been the educator and developer of the community in the matter of amusements; the drama for instance being the child of the Church, unmistakably. The old miracle plays and morality plays of the middle ages were distinct church activities. It was the Church that created the theatre. Then, gradually, and as I think, wisely, the Church handed over the theatre to its own devices except that it continued and continues to keep a watchful and solicitous eye on its moralities—as it has the right to do with its own child.

That, in my own judgment should be the attitude of the Church toward all the amusements of the people and towards many other things. The business of the Church—amongst other tasks—is to provide a fully rounded life for the people. If it is not provided by other agencies, then the Church may step into the breach, but not otherwise. It is never the Church's business to do things that other organizations can do better.

So, in a perfectly organized community, the Church can leave the amusements of the people alone, except in a supervising way; but in a community that is only organized more or less, the Church should step into the gap as a temporary measure.

Racial Pigmentation

QUESTION: How did the various races, white, yellow, and black, get their color?

ANSWER: Some of the very oldest of the Old Testament stories are attempts of the early peoples to explain these things, religiously and politically. Thus, there is a story in the ninth chapter of Genesis explaining the different racial histories and their relative economic and political importance.

But, there are other explanations, more kindly and more scientific. They are of course evolutionary and therefore despised amongst some Christians, but they are the more scientific and I accept them for that reason.

Under the law of the survival of the fittest, the race with the strongest brain-pan and the greatest amount of pigmentation best resisted the terrible onslaughts of the tropical sun. At the same time, that influence of the sun made itself felt by still strengthening the brain-pan and deepening the pigmentation. The colored man, whether yellow or black, tends to lose his color in the temperate zones, though, of course, as millenniums were needed to acquire his characteristics, so millenniums will be required to remove them. The sons of Englishmen born in India are more swarthy than their fathers and the sons of Hindus born in England are less swarthy than *their* fathers.

Conversion and Church Membership

QUESTION: Can a man who is converted be a Christian without becoming a church member?

ANSWER: I'm sure I hope so. Else, the majority of men are in a bad way. It is just as possible for a man to be a

Christian without being a church member as it is for a man to be a church member without being a Christian. But I think that a man who wants, sincerely, to follow Christ should join a church. It is good for the man. Our lonely battles and pilgrimages are most often losing battles and pilgrimages. We march and fight best in companies—as I have often said.

Then, it is good for the church to have in it those who are in the first flush of their new enthusiasms. We other folk get dreadfully stodgy and podgy in our religion. It becomes cold and formal and political, losing its warm enthusiasm and generosity. The churches should have plenty of enthusiastic youth in them and plenty of redeemed Magdalenes and Zaccheuses. One of the reasons why the churches are so lifeless today is that the sinners in them—and there are quite a number—are what our fathers used to call “Gospel-hardened sinners” who have been there so long that they have come to think they are saints.

Should Youth Be Allowed to Develop Its Own Destiny?

QUESTION: A father has a son who is very bright and who seems to have a strongly developed musical faculty, as well as a great deal of ability with radio sets. He is in demand at hotels and dance halls. Is this the path for a Christian lad to tread?

ANSWER: Why, of course, if it really is the path of inclination and ability. It appears that the lad has had fine home training to which he has responded favorably. It is a wrong view of life which holds that it is easier to be a Christian in a monastic cell than in a radio studio or in a hotel orchestra.

Most of my time is spent in a pastor's study and that's a terribly wicked place, sometimes. You've no idea. While, on the other hand, I've met men in radio studios who would put some ministers to the blush for the integrity of their lives and the helpfulness of their influence.

Of course, the life decisions we make at 18 are not always permanent and there is perhaps a certain glamour about this broadcasting profession which we lose as we grow older. It's terribly hard work, exhausting to the nerves, offers little exercise, is filled with all kinds of disappointments. Still, my own view is that it is offering every day, greater opportunities for real human service.

Gentle him along. Don't forbid and don't hurry him along any path. The vision may change. If it doesn't however, there is going to be no harm to your boy in choosing any honorable profession.

Does the Crime or Its Punishment Degrade?

QUESTION: Do you think the electrocution of Mrs. Ruth Snyder is any more of a disgrace for her daughter, Lorraine, than the fact that her mother was guilty of murdering the child's father?

ANSWER: That question seems to me one of the best and most significant that has reached me in a long while. It throws the spot-light on the folly of a lot of our sentimental modern thinking. The atrocity of the crime of which Mrs. Snyder was declared guilty is beyond description. Yet there is a large section of opinion, in this thought of the effect of these things upon the career of the child, which imagines that

the burden that the child will have to carry through life is the fact that her mother expiated that crime.

That should be a solace to the child's mind, and would be in a Society that thought these things through. In such a Society the child would be taught to think that by the price her mother had paid for her crime she had to some degree cancelled the debt she owed Society. The real burden is not that her mother paid the forfeit of her life but that she was such a mother as could commit such a crime. That is the haunting thing; and I trust your question will do something to assist us to remove that Beatitude from our thinking which reads, "Blessed is he—or she—who is not found out."

The Modern Youth

QUESTION: In studying the present activities of us boys and girls in home, school, church, and community, what are the most pressing problems we face in learning to be Christians?

ANSWER: I think the vast majority of the boys and girls of this generation are making a magnificent fight of it—a fight to assimilate knowledge and new ideas that their fathers and mothers hardly knew existed, and amid surroundings as different from those we met as adolescents as chalk is from cheese. As I have said, the majority are winning out in a magnificent way.

Here is one man's answer to a boy's question. Live as if God lived and live as if he were your father instead of your private and unseen policeman. Then, in your relations to sexual problems think of Tennyson's great line, "Reverencing each and each self-reverencing." Then think of another line of Tennyson's, "Reverencing your conscience as your king."

That's about all. Keep your body clean, inside and out. Read Robert Louis Stevenson and not Theodore Dreiser. Read Mark's Gospel. Learn to play fair and don't bother too much about winning by any other means than fair means. Learn to use your fists instead of a gun. Avoid all kinds of bottles and especially flasks, and get the clean collar habit. One other thing—your mother's church is good enough for you if it was good enough for your mother, though you can make it better.

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